

Mestiri says battling Afghans to meet for peace in two weeks

ISLAMABAD (Agencies) — The United Nations special envoy on Afghanistan said Thursday that Afghanistan's warring factions would meet in two weeks to try to find a peaceful end to 30 months of fierce feuding.

That surprise announcement came amid powerful threats of more fighting in the Afghan capital from well-armed opposition Taliban fighters demanding the resignation of President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his military chief, Ahmad Shah Masood.

"The best would be to have some kind of ceasefire and have them talk to each other," Mahmoud Mestiri told the Associated Press in an interview in the Pakistani capital. "They are ready to meet."

When asked he said the meeting would take place in two weeks.

For nearly three weeks Mr. Mestiri has been crisscrossing Afghanistan meeting the main combatants in a ferocious civil war that has left more than 25,000 people dead since April 1992 when insurgents threw out the communists from Kabul.

Much of the fighting has been concentrated in the Afghan capital. It has turned entire neighbourhoods to rubble, made refugees of at least 750,000 people and internal refugees of hundreds of thousands more.

The U.N. has been struggling since 1992 to broker a lasting peace. A former foreign minister of Tuosia, Mr. Mestiri, appointed about one year ago, is the most recent envoy to make the attempt.

In March he almost had an agreement which called for Mr. Rabbani to step down and turn power over to a broad-based council.

But the opposition Taliban religious fighters refused to participate.

They are still refusing, said Mr. Mestiri but not as strenuously. Now the Talibans — students turned guerrilla fighters — are willing to talk to several other factions, but not to Mr. Rabbani.

Eye witnesses say thousands of Taliban fighters are amassing outside the Afghan capital for a final showdown with Mr. Rabbani, whose forces control the entire city.

When the first U.N. peace efforts crumbled last March a bitter fight between the Taliban and Mr. Rabbani's troops left hundreds of people dead but government troops easily held the city.

But Taliban fighters emboldened by their recent successes against government troops in western Afghanistan are threatening to attack Kabul.

Last month they overran the strategic western city of Herat and a critical air force base nearby without a contest.

But Mr. Mestiri says Mr. Rabbani's forces are strong in Kabul and it's unlikely the Taliban could win a military contest for the Afghan capital.

"For the first time they have to calculate military strength... if they are well-advised they will know they cannot win by a full war," he said.

Afghanistan is divided between Mr. Rabbani's forces in Kabul and parts of the north and the Taliban who control about a third of the country, mostly in the south and west. The remainder of the country is divided among regional commanders and a former communist general, Rashid Dostum.

"Right now no one is a full-loser and no one is a full-winner," said Mr. Mestiri.

"That is some kind of balance," he said. "You can impose peace when you have a balance in which everyone



RIGHT-WING PROTEST: Thousands of right-wingers stage a protest in occupied Jerusalem Thursday night against the Sept. 28 agreement signed between the Israeli government and the Palestine Liberation Organisation to expand Palestinian autonomy to the occupied West Bank (see page one) (AFP photo)

Chirac urges battle against 'religious fundamentalism'

TUNIS (R) — President Jacques Chirac, challenged by bombings at home blamed on Muslim militants, on Friday urged Tunisia to join France in the fight against the "religious fundamentalism" in the world.

Mr. Chirac said at the end of a two-day visit to Tunisia that he had agreed in talks with Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali on "the necessity of preventing the rise of religious fundamentalism in the world."

"We will together have to fight the forces of regression and all those who want to oppose bringing closer the two Mediterranean shores in a common modernity," he added.

"Let's make tolerance triumph over sectarianism, the spirit of openness over the forces of hatred and confrontation," he said in a speech to the Tunisian parliament.

Tunisia crushed its own fundamentalist movement in 1992 but has been concerned by violence in neighbouring Algeria. Algerians have also been blamed by authorities and courts in France and Belgium for violence in their countries.

Violence had spread to France where seven people have been killed and more than 130 wounded since July in bomb blasts attributed by

police to Muslim militants. Mr. Ben Ali, in his speech at a banquet in Mr. Chirac's honour on Thursday night, stressed his country's commitment to security and stability in the region, "through the fight against the danger of extremism and terrorism, and (through) development in the whole Mediterranean region."

In his response, Mr. Chirac pledged aid worth one billion francs (\$201.1 million) for 1995 to help the former French colony to adapt its economy to international markets and overcome the effects of two years of drought.

Before the parliament on Friday, Mr. Chirac praised what he called "Tunisia's miracle" in economic development.

"France will be... on your side to aid and support your efforts... and back up your courageous reforms, particularly in the financial markets, privatisation and tourism," he said.

Mr. Chirac was to visit Kairouan's famous mosque later on Friday in what French officials said was a gesture aimed at saluting Tunisia's "tolerant Islam."

He was due to meet Mr. Ben Ali again for talks late on Friday before returning to France.

Iranians develop Islamic computer

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran is adding a new weapon to its arsenal in the fight against Western influence: Islamic video games.

State-run Tehran Television said Thursday "the first computer game embracing Islamic moral values and belief is being developed at an Iranian research centre."

It quoted the head of the centre, identified only as Mr. Sho'ai, as saying the games would be mass produced. But the report gave no details about the games themselves.

Iran's clerical government has been trying to reconcile the puritanical values of the 1979 Islamic revolution with modern technology.

Already, the Iranians have developed a number of computer programmes for the Koran. One programme can search through verses in the text for specific words or subjects.

In the city of Qom, seat of Iran's religious scholarship, students are taught computer classes and use computer programmes for religious research.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Greek Cypriot election set for May 1996

NICOSIA (AP) — Greek Cypriots will go to the polls on May 26 next year to elect a new parliament. House Speaker Alexis Galano said Thursday. The last general election, held in 1991, did not produce a single winner with an overall majority in the 56-seat house. Turkey invaded and occupied the northern third of Cyprus in 1974 following a short-lived coup in Nicosia masterminded by a junta then ruling in Athens and aimed at uniting the island with Greece. A self-styled republic of northern Cyprus was declared in 1983 in the Turkish-occupied areas. Only Ankara recognises it.

Iraq launches giant water supply project to south

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq has begun work again on an abandoned canal to take fresh water from the Euphrates river to the southern province of Basra at a cost of \$5.5 million, the press reported here Thursday. Work stopped on the 231-kilometre canal after the United Nations imposed oil and trade sanctions on Iraq following its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The cost of completing the canal and renovating the supply network to 1.1 million inhabitants in Basra will be 11 billion dinars (\$5.5 million on the black market). Construction Minister Mahmud Dhiab Al Ahmad told the press. Iraq's drinking water supplies have fallen by around 40 per cent since the 1991 Gulf war, the U.N.'s deputy coordinator in Iraq, Viktor Wahrloos, said earlier this year. More than half the water samples taken in the city of Basra are contaminated, Mr. Wahrloos said. The city's infrastructure was badly damaged in the 1980-1988 war with Iran.

Police find 460 kilos of hashish in Lebanese cave

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese police have seized 460 kilograms of hashish hidden in a cave in a mountain village, the official news agency ANI said Thursday. The drugs, worth \$150,000, were to have been exported, the agency said. Police, helped by Syrian intelligence agents, discovered the haul packed in cloth bags in a cave in the village of Rumiyeh in the north Lebanon mountains. A man was arrested and investigations were continuing, ANI said. Drugs seizures have increased in Lebanon since its cannabis and poppy fields in the Syrian-controlled east and north were destroyed after the 1975-1990 civil war.

No 'secret Argentine-Iran contacts'

BUENOS AIRES (AFP) — The Argentine government denied Thursday having made secret contacts with Iran in an attempt to avoid further anti-Semitic attacks, such as the deadly 1994 attack in a Jewish charity centre here. Government sources cited by leading press outlets have indicated that Buenos Aires had agreed to tone down accusations against Islamic fundamentalism in exchange for not being a target of attacks. Eduardo Bauza, head of the cabinet, said the government did not have such contacts, telling reporters officials had "at all times shown its intention to get to the bottom of the attack" against the Argentine Jewish Mutual Association, which killed 86 people and wounded scores more. Argentina has recently launched a new effort to find those responsible for the attack. Police have arrested two men and a woman who were not identified but are presumed to be linked to Carlos Alberto Telleldin, the only suspect currently in custody.

Iraq warns of pollution from sunken ships

UM QASR (R) — Iraq has warned of serious pollution unless the United Nations helps it salvage three tankers loaded with oil that were sunk in the Gulf during the 1991 war over Kuwait. "We wish very sincerely that the agreements will be granted to salvage all the three tankers to save the area and the people (from) the environmental pollution," Abbas Jadi, manager of port of Um Qasr, told Reuters. The tankers were sunk in Iraqi and international waters near the Iraqi port of Um Qasr, 110 kilometres south of the city Basra, by the U.S.-led forces that liberated Kuwait. Mr. Jadi warned if the three tankers — the Einzala, Rumela and Ammourya — broke up: "They will destroy the coast nearby, the harbour nearby and the sea life."

Hollywood producer to shoot Beirut rebuilding

BEIRUT (AFP) — The British producer of a string of Oscar-winning Hollywood productions John Dali said Thursday he was planning a film in Beirut to capture the spirit of post-war reconstruction and reflect on the civil war.

"I would like to capture the madness that took place here. To do something which will reflect on the Lebanese war without focusing on the war itself," Mr. Dali told AFP at the end of a brief visit to Beirut.

Mr. Dali, whose company produced such Hollywood films as Oliver Stone's *Platoon*, *Bernardo Bertolucci's The Last Emperor*, *Salvador* and *The Terminator*, compared Beirut to post-war Berlin. "The destruction here is very dramatic. Parts of the city have been blitzed but life is continuing in a sort of normal way, things are functioning. There is a very positive attitude here now," he said.

"There is a unique opportunity to capture that spirit and the city itself because in five years' time it will be completely rebuilt," he said in reference to multi-billion dollar projects to erase the scars of the 1975-1990 civil war.

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Cyprus lawyer sues Britain and Turkey

NICOSIA (AFP) — A Cypriot lawyer is suing the British and Turkish governments for 250,000 Cypriot pounds (\$500,000) in lost revenue since the 1974 Turkish invasion, a newspaper reported on Thursday.

John Erocoritou told the Cyprus Mail that he was basing his case on the treaty of guarantee signed by Britain, Turkey and Greece in 1960 to protect the newly-independent Cyprus republic.

He said his family had to abandon their business empire in the town of Morphou, including four cinemas, a restaurant, 20 shops, a factory and an orange grove, when Turkish troops invaded and occupied the northern third of the island in 1974.

Mr. Erocoritou's property is now in the breakaway Turkish-Cypriot north of the

"I'm asking for an order of the court restraining any person using my property in the occupied area, and I am asking for damages and lost profits from the day of the invasion until I am given my property back," he said.

His warning was directed at Interior Minister Ali

TEHRAN (AP) — Islamic moderates and conservatives are locked in a struggle for power six months before legislative elections which could also determine the next president and the future course of Iran.

President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, an Islamic moderate, entered the fray this week warning Islamic conservatives, who hold the majority in the present assembly, to stop using their influence to try to determine the outcome of the vote.

"I send a clear notice to all ministers not to allow themselves to be influenced by pressure groups," Mr. Rafsanjani said. "Any transfers made for political or electoral reasons are sinful."

His warning was directed at Interior Minister Ali

Mohammad Besharati, a conservative who has ordered a string of transfers among the country's governors and mayors in the past months.

The conservative lobby has pressed for changes in local administration posts throughout the country in a bid to ensure the success of its own candidates.

The moderate daily Iran News implicitly has criticised Mr. Besharati urging "vigilance to prevent any manipulation" of the polls.

The rivalry mainly centres around the role of the clergy in running the day-to-day affairs and determining economic and foreign policies.

The moderates favour a relaxation of tough Islamic laws, in place since the 1979 Islamic revolution, and a more positive attitude towards Western countries.

But conservatives insist on loyalty to fundamental Islamic principles on the domestic front and oppose influences from Western culture.

Two leading conservative members of parliament, Mohammad-Reza Babonar and Morteza Nahavi, has warned against efforts by moderates to tip the balance in their favour in the next assembly, the fifth since the revolution.

"There is an attempt by those who favour relations with the United States, separation of state from religion and legalising satellites to occupy the next parliament," Mr. Babonar told the conservative Resalat daily recently.

Despite opposition from the moderates, parliament

banned satellite dishes in Iran earlier this year, arguing that foreign broadcasts could corrupt the young.

The conservatives claim to be unquestioning followers of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and support Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri, a main political rival of Mr. Rafsanjani.

Mr. Nateq Nuri has urged the "hizbollah," or Islamic militants, to assert themselves in the next election in face of a victory by "indifferent people."

The speaker, who has made no secret of his ambition to run for president in 1997, said earlier the legislative elections "will also determine the next president."

Despite allying themselves with Mr. Rafsanjani to root out Islamic left-wingers in the

1992 parliamentary elections, the conservatives turned against the president after his programme of economic liberalisation went awry and they thought he had gone too far in opening up the society.

They have successfully pressed for a reversal of Mr. Rafsanjani's market-reform programme in the interest of "social justice."

In the absence of legal political parties, Islamic left-wing radicals and liberals have repeatedly denounced a recent decision by parliament to grant overwhelming power to the Council of the Guardians to oversee the elections.

The council, controlled by the conservative clergy, could now control the entire polling process and thoroughly screen and reject any candidates deemed unsuitable.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre X13813/32

Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 6442/16

Akileh Maternity, J. Ann 6424/1/2

Jahel Amman Maternity 6423/2

Mabas, J. Ann 6361/40

Private, Shmeissani 664/1/4

University Hospital 66913/1

Al-Muasher Hospital 6672/79

The Islamic, Abdali 661/27/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 661/64/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77/10/1/03

Al-Basir, J. Ashraf 77/11/1/26

Army, Marka 89/10/1/15

Queen Alia Hospital 602/24/0/51

Arab Hospital 674/15

TAIF: Arab Centre for Heart and

Special Surgery 665/199

Amman Municipality 697/467

Home News

Bundestag team concludes visit

AMMAN (J.T.) — Vice-President of the Federal German Parliament (Bundestag) Hans Klein and an accompanying parliamentary delegation concluded a five-day visit to Jordan Friday saying his government will do all it can to help Jordan and the peace process.

On Thursday the visiting team called on Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'ad Hayel Sour to express Germany's full support for the Kingdom's peace efforts.

Also, at a press conference Thursday, Mr. Klein voiced Bonn's appreciation of His Majesty King Hussein's endeavours to achieve a comprehensive and durable peace in the region and he reiterated his country's determination to extend assistance to the Kingdom.

Mr. Klein's visit covered three main areas of discussion: the peace process,



democratic process, which he described as impressive.

With that in mind, he said, there was an urgent need for European countries to back development programmes in the Middle Eastern states.

Mr. Klein's visit falls in line with a series of visits to Jordan by several high-ranking German officials.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl visited Jordan for two days in June, and was followed by German Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Carl-Dieter Spranger who spent four days here in August.

The President of the Federal German Parliament, Rita Stissmuth is scheduled to attend the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit which is to begin in Amman on Oct. 29.

bilateral relations, including Bonn's economic assistance to Jordan, and the Kingdom's regional multilateral relations.

The German delegation was also received by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent.

Mr. Klein remarked that Jordan, with its meagre resources, had been able to achieve a great deal in its

List of fugitives suspected of hiding in U.S. to be announced — minister

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Justice Minister Hisham Tal Friday said Jordan will soon receive a list of persons wanted by the Jordanian authorities in connection with various crimes and suspected of being in the U.S. to be extradited to Jordan.

Mr. Tal told the Jordan Times that authorities here have asked their U.S. counterparts to inquire about all such Jordanians and to provide them with information on these fugitives.

Mr. Tal said that the names of these fugitives and the charges against them will be announced.

after the list has been received.

In December 1994, Jordanian and U.S. officials drew up a draft memorandum of understanding on extradition of criminals between the two countries.

The ministry's council approved the draft in June.

Mr. Tal said the treaty was signed between the countries following the U.S. government's request for the extradition of Mohammad Ismael Abequa, a Jordanian-American who was sentenced in Jordan to 15 years in prison for the murder of his wife in the U.S.

The justice minister, however, said that the recent Jordanian request for the

list of fugitives is not related to the U.S. request for extradition of Iyad Nejem, a Jordanian citizen charged as an accessory to the 1993 World Trade Centre bombing which killed six people and caused \$500 million worth of damages.

Mr. Nejem, 24, who was extradited from Jordan to the U.S. on August 3, is accused of driving the vehicle that transported the bomb into the World Trade Centre building.

He is expected to stand trial next year with Ramzi Yousef, the alleged mastermind of the World Trade Centre bombing.

As members of the JMA, we decided to respect the JMA's decision," he explained.

Basem Dajani, president of the JMA, told the Jordan Times in an interview last month that the JMA had informed the 11-member medical committee to act in accordance with JMA rules.

"The General Assembly of the Jordan Medical Association has voted

to these ideas and had facilitated the formation of a medical committee under its umbrella.

Dr. Ammari stressed, however, that the PSEC did not initiate the setting up of the committee, but was only offering assistance.

In the interview preceding the medical committee's decision to withdraw from the conference, Dr. Ammari said the PSEC would not interfere in the committee's deliberations, and added that he hoped that individual members would still attend the conference.

As practising physicians, all members of the medical committee are required to be members of the JMA.

The medical committee had been formed at the government's initiative to advertise Jordan's high-quality medical services in the region, especially since many patients come to Jordan from surrounding countries, Dr. Hammoudi had told the Jordan Times earlier.

Its 11 members came from the private sector.

According to Dr. Hammoudi, the medical committee took its decision to withdraw from the conference at a meeting Thursday evening, and has already informed the JMA and the Private Sector Executive Committee (PSEC) under whose auspices the committee was formed.

Shabib Ammari, rapporteur of the PSEC, told the Jordan Times that a number of physicians had approached the PSEC with some very good ideas on how to promote Jordan as a regional medical centre.

The PSEC responded to

these ideas and had facilitated the formation of a medical committee under its umbrella.

The work of the PSEC has no political dimension," he said. "It is up to participants if they wish to shake hands with Israelis.

We respect the individual's decision on this," he explained.

Jordan Times, Saturday, October 7, 1995

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Private sector medical committee decides against attending MENA

By Beatrix Immenkamp
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The private sector medical committee formed to represent the Jordanian medical community at the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit has decided against participation in the conference, which is scheduled to begin Oct. 29.

The committee bowed to pressures from the Jordanian Medical Association (JMA) which argued that participation in the conference would violate the association's decision to boycott normalization with Israel.

The medical committee has decided to discontinue its activities," Sa'ed Hammoudi, a member of the committee, said.

There has been a disagreement between the JMA, which argued that participation in the conference constitutes a form of normalization, and the medical committee, which argued that it did not, Mr. Hammoudi said.

As members of the JMA, we decided to respect the JMA's decision," he explained.

Basem Dajani, president of the JMA, told the Jordan Times in an interview last month that the JMA had informed the 11-member medical committee to act in accordance with JMA rules.

"The General Assembly of the Jordan Medical Association has voted

against normalization with Israel and against professional contacts with Israelis.

Participation in conferences by members of the association should be in line with this decision. We have therefore instructed the medical committee to abide by the rules of the association and not to attend the MENA conference," Dr. Dajani said.

As practising physicians, all members of the medical committee are required to be members of the JMA.

The medical committee had been formed at the government's initiative to advertise Jordan's high-quality medical services in the region, especially since many patients come to Jordan from surrounding countries, Dr. Hammoudi had told the Jordan Times earlier.

The PSEC has 11 sectoral committees, but we only have a problem with one of the committees," he said.

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We respect the individual's decision on this," he explained.

Panel presents \$133m in transport projects for MENA

AMMAN (Petra) — A sub-committee on transport Friday announced that seven projects worth a total of \$133 million have been prepared for submission to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit.

The panel, charged with projects concerning the transport sector, is part of the larger Executive Committee preparing for the MENA conference.

Sub-committee rapporteur Sufian Muheisen said in a statement that one project, worth \$38 million, entails revamping the country's fleet of transport trucks.

Another project, worth \$11.2 million, will upgrade and modernise the engineering section at Royal Jordanian (RJ) airlines.

Information centres to be set up

Meanwhile, Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Saraih Friday announced that the Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) has made 3,000 telephone lines available in preparation for the Oct 29 MENA conference.

The minister made the statement during an inspection tour of the TCC's departments to examine preparations and activities for the provision of telephone, telex and facsimile services at the conference's press centre and at hotels.

Two information centres for journalists at the Jerusalem and Middle East Hotels will be set up to supplement the main information centre at the Al Hussein Sports.

A fourth information centre will be set up at Amra Hotel for business people attending the conference. Mr. Saraih said.

American, German as well as local companies are involved in installing the telephone, facsimile lines and cellular telephone services at these centres, according to the minister.

Arrangements for these services are expected to be finalised within the next few days, he added.

Bank employees to get 12% raise

AMMAN (Petra) — The staff of the Amman-Cairo Bank will get an increase of 12 per cent of their base salaries as of Nov. 1, according to a ruling passed by the Industrial Court.

The court ruling called for granting bank employees a 12 per cent salary increase, stipulates that the raise should not be less than JD 20, nor more than JD 150 per month beginning November.

The ruling, which took into consideration the strong financial standing of the bank, stressed the need to pay end-of-service compensation to all staff regardless of their years of service with the bank.

It also raised the loan ceiling granted to employees to 70 times the monthly salary of the employees, payable over a period of 20 years with simple interest.

The court, presided over by Judge Mahmoud

Dahshan, said the Amman Cairo Bank has achieved net profits of JD 3.8 million in 1994, and has not experienced any financial crises or difficulties, noting that the bank's achievements are attributed to the bank's range of activities and the efficiency of its staff.

The Amman Cairo Bank case was referred to the Industrial Court on Aug. 1 by Labour Minister Nader Abu Sha'ar, following the failure of efforts by the reconciliation council to reach a settlement to the dispute between the bank management and its staff over salaries and working conditions.

The ruling called on the bank management to increase its contribution towards the medical insurance scheme and to purchase a group insurance policy for its staff which would cover death, and partial and total disability.

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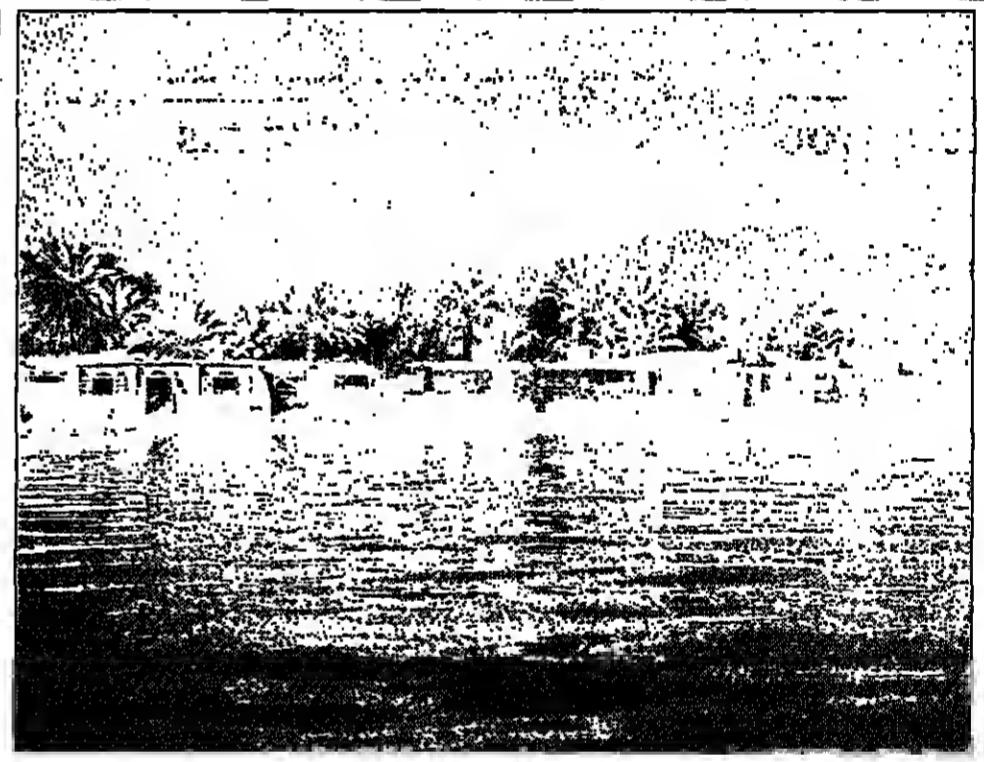
AMMAN (Petra) — A multi-million dollar tourism resort in the port city of Aqaba has been agreed upon with the American company, Magic World, according to Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) President Fayez Khasawneh.

Speaking after signing the agreement with Magic World Manager Richard Ligon on Thursday, Dr. Khasawneh described the project as establishing Aqaba as part of the so-called "Red Sea Riviera."

Magic World will build a 256-room hotel and 200 chalets along with an entertainment park on 400 dunums in Aqaba, according to Dr. Khasawneh, who announced the project at a press conference in Amman.

Dr. Khasawneh said the project will be carried out in cooperation with and support from the Jordanian government.

Magic World will provide the funding for the project, and the ARA will soon offer shares in the project to other firms to invest in the Kingdom.



A pristine part of the Aqaba coastline (file photo)

American firm to build expansive resort in Aqaba

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multi-million dollar tourism resort in the port city of Aqaba has been agreed upon with the American company, Magic World, according to Aqaba Region Authority (ARA) President Fayez Khasawneh.

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The ARA's report noted that APC sales in 1994 achieved record sales of 1,516,652 metric tonnes with India as the top importer of Jordanian

potash.

"By signing several long-term contracts with the largest importers in India, APC managed to regain its place as a major supplier to the Indian market. Indian imports totalled 350,015 million tonnes followed by Indonesia with 181,000 million, and Malaysia 174,340 million," the report said.

Figures for 1994 show the ability of APC to adapt to the constant changes in world markets, the report said.

APC sales in 1994.

"In Europe," the report added, "APC increased its share of the market after the sharp price increase where sales to Italy have doubled and an acceptable position in the Benelux (Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg) and Spain have been achieved and is expected to be maintained."

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profit of JD 24.2 million or a 10.4 per

Russian commander in Chechenya hurt in attack

GROZNY, Russia (AP) — Russia's top military commander in the breakaway Republic of Chechenya was critically wounded in a bomb explosion Friday, news agencies said.

Lt. Gen. Anatoly Romanov, 47, was hospitalised in grave condition after suffering a cranial wound. His deputy, Col. Alexander Zaslavsky, and their car's driver were killed in the blast, which also wounded at least nine Russian troops.

The explosion occurred in the Chechen capital of Grozny as Gen. Romanov's motorcade was going through an underpass.

It was the second major attack on a senior Russian official in the last three weeks. On Sept. 20, a powerful bomb explosion narrowly missed Oleg Lobo, Russian President Boris Yeltsin's envoy in Chechenya.

Friday's bomb attack was apparently aimed at Russian Interior Minister Gen. Anatoly Kulikov, who was touring Chechenya but left for Moscow earlier than expected, the ministry said.

"War in Chechenya is still going on," Russian Deputy Prime Minister Oleg Soskovets said at a government session in Moscow after disclosing the news of the attack, according to the Interfax News Agency.

Gen. Romanov has spearheaded efforts to negotiate an end to the war, which began in December 1994 when Russian troops invaded Chechenya to squelch its three-year independence

bid.

A truce signed by the Russians and Chechens in July has been interrupted by continuous clashes. Gen. Romanov has extensively travelled throughout Chechenya to convince Chechens to lay down arms in response to a promise of the withdrawal of Russian troops.

A spokesman for the Russian military command in Chechenya, who declined to be identified by name, said the attack was an "attempt to disrupt the process of peaceful settlement in Chechenya."

The remote-controlled bomb also killed and wounded at least several passengers on a commuter bus passing through the underpass at the same time with Gen. Romanov's motorcade.

Gen. Romanov has been taken to a Russian military hospital in Vladikavkaz in neighboring North Ossetia for urgent treatment. A team of doctors has left Moscow to help on Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev's order.

In the past 24 hours, six Russian soldiers were killed and four wounded in other clashes around Chechenya, Interfax said.

Meanwhile former Russian parliament Speaker Ruslan Khushalatov blasted Chechenya's Moscow-backed government Thursday, calling it an illegitimate body hindering the peace process in the breakaway southern republic.

"(The government) came to power on Russian bayo-

nets and tanks, spilling a sea of blood," Mr. Khushalatov told the Interfax News Agency.

Mr. Khushalatov, an ethnic Chechen who remains popular in Chechenya, led a parliamentary rebellion against President Yeltsin in Moscow in 1993.

But Mr. Yeltsin conceded recently that Mr. Khushalatov might be able to help achieve a peace accord palatable to Chechens.

On Thursday, Mr. Khushalatov said the leaders of the Moscow-supported government "live in their narrow world isolated from the trouble of the people."

Moscow installed the national revival government after invading Chechenya in December to quash its three-year bid for independence.

Mr. Khushalatov also pushed for more negotiations, saying: "a round table is better than a war."

Meanwhile, the situation across the Caucasus Mountains republic remained tense.

The village of Sevirovsk, on Chechenya's western border with the ethnic republic of Ingushetia, has been surrounded by Russian troops for several days, according to local reports.

Hundreds of Chechens and Ingush are picketing nearby to demand that the Russians free the town, which Moscow says is controlled by armed rebels.

In the capital, Grozny, Chechens threatened to halt peace talks unless Russian

troops stop "violating human rights" in Sevirovsk, Interfax said.

But in two other Chechen towns, rebels resumed disarmament Thursday, as part of a July 30 military accord. Chechen fighters turned over weapons in Alkhazurovo and Komsomolskoye in the south of the republic, Interfax said.

The accord, which calls for rebel disarmament, partial Russian pullout and prisoner exchanges, is supposed to pave the way for elections in Chechenya, with the republic's political status to be determined later.

But Mr. Khushalatov said Thursday that elections will be impossible without a legitimate government — which the national revival is not, he said.

Moscow says about 13,000 troops have been pulled out of Chechenya, but thousands more remain. The warring sides are frequently accusing each other of dragging their feet in implementing the accord.

Gen. Grachev, speaking to World War II veterans in Moscow Thursday, said the rebel Chechens regard the treaty as "a ploy for the sake of military buildup."

He estimated the rebel strength at 6,000 fighters. The separatists have recently acquired 12 tanks and 16 armoured vehicles from unspecified sources, he said.



Pope John Paul II (centre) greets the crowd at New Jersey's Newark International Airport upon His arrival in the United States for a five-day visit (AFP photo)

Pope decries abortion and euthanasia in first U.S. mass

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey (AP) — Pope John Paul II urged America to welcome immigrants and rid itself of the "moral blight" of abortion and euthanasia.

Just 16 kilometres from the Statue of Liberty, the Pontiff told 82,948 rain-soaked worshippers Thursday to continue in the tradition of the civil rights movement to extend legal protection to "the unborn child," the elderly and the severely disabled.

"Both as Americans and as followers of Christ, American Catholics must be committed to the defence of life in all its stages and in every condition," the Pontiff declared from a giant altar at one end zone.

In addition to his criticism of liberals' attempts to expand access to abortion and to permit assisted suicides, the Pope was critical of recent conservative efforts to limit immigration.

He recited part of Emma Lazarus' 19th century poem in urging Americans to continue to welcome immigrants yearning to breathe free and to serve the poor.

"If America were to turn on itself, would this not be the beginning of the end of what constitutes the very essence of the 'American experience?'" he asked in his homily.

Hours of steady rain could not detract from the enthusiasm of the packed masses inside the converted football field. Some wept, others pressed their hands to their hearts or cried "viva el papa" as the Pontiff circled the stadium in his Popemobile.

"This is the most important day of my life. I cannot describe to you how important it is to be here," 76-year-old Edward Pietro of Toms River said. "After today, if nothing else exciting or wonderful happens in my life, I will die a fulfilled man."

Now, he stressed, the danger stems from a "narrow and exclusive nationalism," which triggered "a true nightmare of violence and terror," most recently during ethnic upheavals in Rwanda and Bosnia.

"The United Nations

organisation needs to rise more and more above the cold status of an administrative institution and to become a moral centre where all the nations of the world feel at home," he told the 185-member General Assembly.

The Pope's visit during the United Nations' 50th anniversary year was the central point of his fourth pilgrimage to the United States. The organisation is deeply in debt, in part because of its expanded peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and elsewhere, and Pope John Paul wants to see it strengthened.

But that meeting like the other events since the Pope's arrival Wednesday was for a small group of dignitaries and invited guests. It was here in Giants Stadium that masses of the faithful could see the man many believe is the Vicar of Christ on Earth.

In an atmosphere more resonant of a concert or athletic event than a mass, flashbulbs popped throughout the stadium as the Pope re-entered the field for the opening procession.

Before that, worshippers did "the wave" and chanted "John Paul II, we love you" as they waited.

The Pope was partially protected by a white canopy hanging over a huge red-carpeted altar set up in an end zone. At one point, the wind knocked off his white skullcap. Some bishops celebrating mass with the Pope wore clear rain slickers over their white and gold vestments.

At the United Nations, Pope John Paul sketched the dramatic changes since he last addressed the Assembly in 1979 — the fall of communism and cuts in nuclear arsenals.

Now, he stressed, the danger stems from a "narrow and exclusive nationalism," which triggered "a true nightmare of violence and terror," most recently during ethnic upheavals in Rwanda and Bosnia.

"Nationalism, particularly

All Ireland honours Nobel winner

DUBLIN (R) — They say a true poet is not recognised in his home country. They were wrong in the case of Seamus Heaney, who won the Nobel Literature Prize Thursday.

Residents of the Northern Ireland city of Londonderry heaped praise on Mr. Heaney, an unassuming, tanned poet who married Irish lyricism with a frank look at the pain of modern Ireland.

Among them was school contemporary John Hume, an Irish nationalist who is himself tipped by some to win the Nobel Peace Prize for pushing the Northern Ireland peace process which silenced guerrilla guns one year ago. "It's a fabulous news," said Mr. Hume, leader of the moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party of Northern Ireland. "This will go across the country, north and south."

Mr. Hume dismissed suggestions that the prize was linked to the Northern Ireland peace process. "The reason for this award is his standing across the world as a poet and not because of what is happening in our part of the world," he told Irish Radio.

Irish Prime Minister John Bruton said: "His poetry, which has enriched and illuminated Irish life, from simple everyday events to his reflections on the divisions which have afflicted the island of Ireland, truly deserve this international recognition and acclaim."

President Mary Robinson said that the award "brought great honour to Ireland," whose previous winners include W. B. Yeats, Samuel Beckett and George Bernard Shaw.

Brian Friel, Ireland's best-known living playwright



Seamus Heaney

and a close friend of Mr. Heaney, said: "It is a wonderful achievement. I am delighted for Seamus and I am delighted for the country."

At St. Columb's College, the Roman Catholic boys' school in Londonderry which Mr. Heaney attended school president Father John Walsh, told final year pupils about the award.

"It is a well deserved honour. It is also an honour for the school and the county and it is an honour for the country."

Pat McCarty, editor of the Derry Journal, said it was the kind of tonic the area needed after years of conflict. "It is a great honour which assures his place in the literary pantheon."

Information Director Alf McCreary of Queens University, Belfast said: "We at Queens are absolutely delighted that this exceptional honour has been won by one of our most distinguished graduates, who is one of the finest poets of his generation."

"Seamus is a national poet who has become an international poet. What he has become is a citizen of the world," said Theo Dorgan, director of literary organisa-

tion Poetry Ireland.

"He is a man of most extraordinary generosity towards his work, towards other poets and to his reader," Mr. Dorgan said. "He has also retained an extraordinary sense of wonder — and that, above all is what is honoured today."

Drinkers at Scruffy Murphy, one of the poet's old Dublin haunts, said they were delighted by the news but had not read much of his poetry.

"I used to know him when he drank here. He was a lovely man. Like a lot of poets, he liked a pint of stout," said Michael Bourke, former manager of the pub. "I didn't realise he was in the big league."

Some patrons of the pub said they had never heard of Mr. Heaney. Most said they had never read his poems.

"I haven't read any of it. Some people might have, if it was required reading for them at university," said Noel Hall, accountant.

"I don't read his poetry, but I'm very glad he won it," said builder Derek Keegan. "I don't know much about him. I'm afraid."

Meanwhile Harvard University joined the chorus of worldwide praise for Mr. Heaney Thursday, hailing the poet as the first Harvard professor ever to win the Nobel Literature Prize.

"Seamus Heaney is one of the great poets of our century," said Harvard President Neil Rudenstine, himself an English professor and scholar of renaissance literature.

"He has written verse that is moving, always complex, and yet powerful in its simplicity — so pell-mell it can never be muddled," to borrow from one of his lines."

U.S. envoy pulled out of Colombia

BOGOTA (R) — The U.S. government has pulled its ambassador out of Colombia amid deteriorating relations between the two countries, a local television news programme reported late Thursday.

Although the U.S. government has said Ambassador Myles Frechette is on vacation, it has actually pulled him out of his post temporarily, the Washington correspondent of the programme CM said.

The State Department in Washington had no immediate comment on the report.

Citing sources in Washington, the correspondent said the government decided to pull Mr. Frechette out of the country because it was not pleased with the way bilateral relations were being handled.

He said the ambassador's removal was intended as a "diplomatic message" to Colombian President Ernesto Samper but did not elaborate.

Before leaving Bogota last week, Mr. Frechette told local radio he was going to Europe on a holiday with his family.

U.S. embassy officials could not be reached for comment after the programme's broadcast.

Relations between the two countries worsened Wednesday after a congressman presented to the lower house recordings of alleged telephone conversations between officials of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

Independent deputy Carlos Alonso Lucio played during a televised session of the House of Representatives a series of conversations in which Tony Semenca, the head of the DEA in Colombia, allegedly discussed plans to conspire against Mr. Samper with officials in Washington.

Former Major aide to lose parliament seat

LONDON (R) — Former Finance Minister Norman Lamont, a one-time close friend of John Major who became one of the British Prime Minister's toughest critics, faced prospect of the political wilderness Friday.

He is to lose his seat in parliament in a change of constituency boundaries, though he says he will seek another seat.

Mr. Lamont, a Conservative, failed to win enough votes in the local constituency party to run for the re-drawn seat in

the lower house recordings of alleged telephone conversations between officials of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union's executive body has announced that it would seek sharp new cuts in member states' emissions of chemicals that destroy the Earth's protective ozone layer.

"We in the Union have to act," the EU Commission plans to flesh out details and approve the two proposals at a meeting in Luxembourg.

If the ministers approve new targets, the EU will try to convince other nations to accept the same limits at a meeting this fall in Vienna to amend the Montreal Protocol, the treaty limiting worldwide emissions of ozone-depleting chemicals.

Japan minister may be forced to quit

TOKYO (R) — In a new blow to Japan's shaky coalition government, Justice Minister Tomoharu Tazawa may be forced to resign over a reported secret deal with the opposition.

"This is a serious matter for the cabinet," top government spokesman Koken Nosaka said. "We will ask the minister to clarify this." Asked if the government

would seek Mr. Tazawa's resignation, Mr. Nosaka replied: "That is a possibility."

The Yomiuri Shimbu Friday accused Mr. Tazawa of making a backroom deal with the opposition Shinshinto (New Frontier Party) to withdraw questions in parliament about a loan.

An aide to Mr. Tazawa refused to comment on the report, but the Yomiuri quoted him as denying he made such a request.

The newspaper said

Shinshinto upper house member Ichiji Ishii agreed to withdraw references in prepared questions to Mr. Tazawa on Oct. 3 about a 200 million Yen (\$2 million) loan he had failed to report in his list of assets.

An aide to Mr. Tazawa refused to comment on the report, but the Yomiuri quoted him as denying he made such a request.

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An aide to Mr. Tazawa refused to comment on the report, but the Yomiuri quoted him as denying he made such a request.

Titanic poster sold for \$12,100

LONDON (R) — A 1912 poster urging Britons to sail on the Titanic on its fateful maiden voyage has been sold for £7,650 (\$12,110), Christie's auctioneers said. The poster for the White Star Line features a four-funnel vessel and calls the Olympic and Titanic "the largest steamers in the world". The Titanic, supposedly unsinkable, struck an iceberg and sank off Newfoundland in April, 1912. More than 1,500 people died. Found folded in a chest in an attic in Sheffield, northern England, earlier this year, the poster was bought by a British collector of memorabilia.

Moroccan sardine fishermen net blue whale

RABAT (R) — Moroccan fishermen trawling for sardines in the Atlantic netted instead a 12-tonne blue whale, the Moroccan News Agency (MAP) said. The 13-metre whale dwarfed the

Titanic poster sold for \$12,100
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Moroccan sardine fishermen net blue whale

ABAT (R) — Moroccan fishermen trailing a 12-ton whale instead of a 12-ton sardine, the Moroccan Agency (MAP) said. A 14-metre whale dwarfed a 11-metre trawler, which is the Western Saharan port of Tarfaya. MAP quoted a captain as saying he had failed to free his net despite a struggle of more than 10 hours. It was not immediately known if the whale survived. A man was seen in the ocean waters.

Calls to stop Olympic bird release

LANTA (R) — A flight of 100 animal rights activists asked organisers of the 1996 Olympics not to use live birds during opening ceremonies at the Summer Games in Atlanta, submitted to the organizing committee at 200 groups. The Ethical Treatment of Animals (ATA) said the birds had been harmed if they were used after the lighting of the Olympic flame.

Animal rights activists say 2,000 pigeons will be released during the opening ceremonies. Butie Olsen, a spokesman for the Atlanta committee for the Olympic Games (AOG), said the ceremony had been delayed after the lighting of the Olympic flame.

Animal rights
The fire, burning in scenic woods and brush on the northern California coast, spread to 11,100 acres (4,450 hectares) Thursday, said Leslie Price, a fire information officer.

The blaze has destroyed 47 buildings, including dozens of luxury homes, and damaged a dozen more in secluded wooded hillsides near Inverness, 50 kilometers north of San Francisco.

A preliminary estimate put property damage at between \$20 million and \$30 million, Mr. Price said.

Victim's father to pursue civil suit against Simpson

LOS ANGELES (R) — In a sign that O. J. Simpson's legal troubles are far from over, the father of murder victim Ron Goldman is vowing to press ahead with a wrongful-death lawsuit that could cost the football legend millions.

Fred Goldman, in a brief interview with Reuters late Thursday night, said his family intends to pursue the civil suit despite Simpson's acquittal on double-murder charges.

Lead defence attorney Johnnie Cochran had appealed earlier to the victim's family to drop their complaints, which — like the criminal case — accuse Simpson of murdering his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Goldman.

At some point there should be closure on this. The jury has spoken and I have said to the families to rethink this — you should



CHIRAC IN TUNISIA: Tunisians wave and brandish portraits to greet French President Jacques Chirac and his Tunisian counterpart Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali drive through Tunis on Thursday (see page 2) (AFP photo)

Landslides reported as strong quake rattles islands south of Tokyo

TOKYO (AFP) — A strong earthquake measuring 5.6 on the Richter Scale shook the Izu Islands south of Tokyo Friday, the biggest tremor in a series which has rattled the area over the past week, the Meteorological Agency said.

The quake, which occurred at 9:43 p.m. (1243 GMT), caused several landslides and damaged roads on the island of Koza, Japan Broadcasting Corp. (NHK) reported, adding that water supplies had also been disrupted.

NHK said the Japanese military had sent helicopters to the islands although no injuries were reported. The intensity of the tremor measured five on the seven-point Japanese scale on Koza and four on nearby Miyake island. An intensity of five on the Japanese scale is large enough to cause cracks in plaster walls and concrete buildings.

The quake, whose epicentre was 10 kilometres under the seabed south of the Izu peninsula, followed a smaller tremor 14 minutes earlier. The Izu peninsula, a popular resort south of Tokyo, has been the centre of major seismic activity for the past week, including volcanic activity near the city of Ito where a major undersea eruption took place in 1989.

A Japanese seismologist interviewed by NHK said the relatively strong quake late Friday was related to the recent activity in the area, where several tectonic plates meet. But the Meteorological Agency said they were unrelated.

Earlier Friday, volcanic activity around the Izu peninsula weakened but precautions against the "big one" continued, with an offshore research system set up near the epicentre of the

original series of tremors.

It was followed by another tremor of 4.0, some 16 minutes after the main earthquake which was felt in a wide area stretching from Yokohama, south of Tokyo, to Hamamatsu near Nagoya and Tateyama at the tip of the Boso peninsula.

The Izu peninsula, a popular resort south of Tokyo, has been the centre of major seismic activity for the past week, including volcanic activity near the city of Ito where a major undersea eruption took place in 1989.

A seismic activity has calmed, but since the Earth's crust continues to move we cannot relax yet," an agency official told Kyodo News Service.

The Maritime Safety Agency set up a remote-controlled research system above the seabed Friday to collect detailed seismic information. It also sent Shouyou, a 1,900-tonne research vessel, to control the system and analyse data.

Breeze helps California firefighters

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — A cool Pacific breeze aided firefighters battling Friday to halt a huge wildfire that has destroyed dozens of luxury homes and burned thousands of acres of a California wildlife refuge.

The fire, burning in scenic woods and brush on the northern California coast, spread to 11,100 acres (4,450 hectares) Thursday, said Leslie Price, a fire information officer.

The blaze has destroyed 47 buildings, including dozens of luxury homes, and damaged a dozen more in secluded wooded hillsides near Inverness, 50 kilometers north of San Francisco.

A preliminary estimate put property damage at between \$20 million and \$30 million, Mr. Price said.

Four firefighters have suffered minor injuries.

Bruton urges outside help for N.Ireland peace

DUBLIN (R) — Britain and Ireland are inching towards setting up an international body to try to break the deadlock over disarming Northern Ireland guerrillas, which has brought a year-long peace process to a standstill.

Irish Prime Minister John Bruton said in New York Thursday night that the two governments, often at odds over how to break the logjam, were now close to setting up such a panel.

"I believe sufficient common ground will soon exist on this to enable the two governments to proceed relatively quickly to establish such a body," he told Irish-American business leaders.

"I believe we must now adopt this international approach in the Irish situation and do so speedily," he said.

Later this year U.S. President Bill Clinton travels to Britain, Northern Ireland and Ireland for what U.S. officials say could be a visit crucial to the peace process.

U.S. involvement has brought foreign policy successes to Mr. Clinton in the Middle East and Bosnia in recent weeks and a breakthrough on Northern Ireland would seal his world reputation as his campaign for re-election is launched.

"Experience in other conflict situations has shown the value of an external, international input in helping opposing sides face up to the realities of the particular conflict situation in which they find themselves," Mr. Bruton said.

Irish officials say the panel could be headed by George Mitchell, a former U.S. senator currently charged with channelling international investment into Northern Ireland and border counties to cement peace.

The idea of an international panel received a setback last month when Sinn Fein, political backers of Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas, said they feared it was a trap to make the gunmen hand over their weapons before all-party talks.

But the two governments hope that by setting it up they can move towards disarming both the IRA, which fought British rule of Northern Ireland, and loyalists, who battled to retain it, and create conditions for fresh negotiations.

Mr. Bruton said it was crucial to create a situation in which gunmen felt they no longer needed arms. "The Irish government wants to eliminate fear from politics. That is why we want the total eradication of all weapons for good," he said.

Rebel soldiers released; mercenary leaves Comoros

MORONI, Comoros Islands (AP) — Hundreds of Comorian soldiers who surrendered to a French intervention force were released from detention Friday under an amnesty granted to supporters of the short-lived coup led by mercenary Bob Denard.

The soldiers raised their arms and shouted in joy after walking out of Moroni's Hahaya Airport, where they were held overnight by French commandos after surrendering the day before.

Mr. Denard, 66, a Frenchman, was reportedly flown Friday under French military custody from the nearby island of La Reunion to Djibouti, where France maintains a military base. He is expected to eventually arrive in France and face criminal charges.

Life began returning to normal in Moroni, the capital, following a turbulent week in which foreign mercenaries led by Mr. Denard toppled the government and seized President Said Mohammad Djohar, then were defeated in a lightning invasion by 600 elite French troops Wednesday.

People filled markets

Friday and wooden fishing boats dotted the bays and harbours bordered by sand or dark lava stone. French troops continued to check cars along the main road, but reduced their visibility and began disembarking.

Four people, including two Comorian soldiers, were killed in the French attack.

Mr. Djohar's prime minister has announced a new government comprising members of the ruling party and a small opposition alliance without Mr. Djohar, who has been taken to nearby La Reunion for medical tests.

Other opposition groups reject the new government and want talks to set up a consensus leadership that would ask the United Nations to organise elections early next year.

Mr. Denard negotiated his surrender Thursday. He was flown to La Reunion under arrest for illegally leaving France while under investigation for the death of Ahmad Abdallah Abderrahmane, then the president of the Comoros, in 1989.

Mr. Denard ruled the dirt-

poor Indian Ocean archipelago, a former French colony, through figurehead presidents from 1978 until the mysterious shooting of Mr. Djohar who took refuge in the French embassy after the coup.

He said soldiers wanted a new military chief to replace Azali Assoumani, the chief of staff under Mr. Djohar who took refuge in the French embassy after the coup.

Mr. Assoumani was seen in a car traveling from the airport toward town Friday, showing he felt it was safe enough to move about. It was not known if Prime Minister Mohammed Cabdi Al Yachout also had emerged from a week of hiding in the embassy.

Mr. Soco would prefer Capt. Combo Ayoub, who led troops loyal to Mr. Denard's coup, as the new military chief. Capt. Ayoub's whereabouts were unknown Friday. Capt. Pignot, the French military spokesman, said he had no information.

"First the mercenaries come and make trouble," said Capt. Asman Hamadi Soco, 32, a nine-year veteran. "Then the French come and make more trouble. They shoot people, take possessions, damage the airport."

"They treat us like nothing because they can dance in



Residents survey the damage in a street of Panama City Beach, Florida, in the aftermath of hurricane Opal (AP photo)

Cleanup under way as hurricane death toll rises

FORT WALTON BEACH, Fla. (R) — The remnants of hurricane Opal scattered across the northeastern United States and eastern Canada Friday as rescue teams searched islands off the Florida coast for residents whose whereabouts were unknown.

Opal, which disintegrated Thursday as it raced north after making landfall in Florida, is believed responsible for up to 21 deaths, including as many as 11 in the United States and 10 in Mexico.

The storm left hundreds of thousands of people without electricity in Florida, Georgia and Alabama. Downed trees and power lines forced the closure of schools and many businesses in Atlanta as the city struggled to cope with flooded creeks, rivers and streets.

As residents and disaster workers began a massive cleanup from the third hurricane to hit the Florida panhandle this year, officials say up to two dozen people who may have decided to wait out the storm on the exposed barrier islands off the Florida coast are unaccounted for.

Emergency management officials said searchers, including local authorities, the U.S. military and special urban search and rescue teams from as far away as Virginia and Charleston, South Carolina, were combing devastated areas of Okaloosa Island, Holiday Isle and the town of Destin.

"Our main concern is that

although a mandatory evacuation order was issued, people chose to stay behind, and we cannot account for a couple of dozen," said Marc Steinman, Emergency Medical Services manager.

He said authorities are particularly concerned about an area called Norreigo Point, a densely populated and heavily developed community.

"According to a preliminary estimate by the insurance information institute, Opal caused \$1.8 billion in damages to insured property in Florida alone. The storm's toll was certain to rise when estimates were made in Georgia — where 45 counties were declared disaster areas by Governor Zell Miller — and other affected states.

In the shore communities of the Florida panhandle, hit two months ago by hurricane Erin, residents began to regroup once again. Teams of disaster relief workers were combing through Destin and a peninsula community of Holiday Isle, which authorities said was underwater at one point.

The Red Cross said 197 shelters were up and running, serving more than 31,000 victims in five states.

In the shore communities of the Florida panhandle, hit two months ago by hurricane Erin, residents began to regroup once again. Teams of disaster relief workers were combing through Destin and a peninsula community of Holiday Isle, which authorities said was underwater at one point.

Georgia officials said four people had been killed by falling trees and local media reported three other deaths in storm-related traffic accidents. Opal also claimed two lives in Alabama, one in North Carolina, and one in Florida.

The Red Cross said 197 shelters were up and running, serving more than 31,000 victims in five states.

People who asked about Heather were told that she had left home, and, perhaps because of her age, her disappearance did not attract official attention for years.

But by 1992 questions were being asked. When police interviewed Rosemary, she told them she had heard from Heather on the telephone.

Suspicious authorities continued looking, and on Feb. 24, 1994, a search warrant was issued for the West's home.

Two days later police diggers unearthed a skeleton under the patio. The skull had been struck from the spine, Mr. Leveson said, and the bones had been chopped so that the remains could be forced into a small hole.

British murder scene 'too terrible for words'

WINCHESTER, England (R) — Young women whose decapitated bodies were found at the home of alleged serial killer Rosemary West spent their last moments as objects of the "sexual depravity" of Mrs. West and her husband, a prosecutor said Friday.

Irish officials say the panel could be headed by George Mitchell, a former U.S. senator currently charged with channelling international investment into Northern Ireland and border counties to cement peace.

The idea of an international panel received a setback last month when Sinn Fein, political backers of Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas, said they feared it was a trap to make the gunmen hand over their weapons before all-party talks.

But the two governments hope that by setting it up they can move towards disarming both the IRA, which fought British rule of Northern Ireland, and loyalists, who battled to retain it, and create conditions for fresh negotiations.

Mr. Bruton said it was crucial to create a situation in which gunmen felt they no longer needed arms. "The Irish government wants to eliminate fear from politics. That is why we want the total eradication of all weapons for good," he said.

Mr. Leveson described the gruesome discoveries within minutes of opening the prosecution's case against Mrs. West in a hushed and tense courtroom.

He said life at the house at 25 Cromwell Street in Gloucester had been described in graphic detail by visitors.

"Other girls who came and

went over the years have spoken of violent and degrading sexual activity, perhaps revealing things which they have long since been prepared to cover up, kept hidden or forgotten," he said.

"The upshot is this case: The crown alleges that over a period of many years, especially between 1972 and 1979, girls staying at or visiting 25 Cromwell Street, or who were enticed or simply abducted, were taken there for sexual abuse — both by Rosemary and Frederick West — in a most depraved and most appalling way."

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"Other girls who came and

that she was dead because both of them had been involved in killing her," Mr. Leveson said.

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MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Faximile: 696183

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Of postures and playing politics

THE ISRAELI KNESSET narrowly approved the Oslo II accord with the Palestinians and gave the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin only a semblance of a new lease of life. The wide split in the Israeli parliament and among Israelis does not augur well for the third and last stage of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks on the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip when the stakes are greater. The growing schism in the Israeli hoiy politic prompted Israeli President Weizman to call on Mr. Rabin to solicit wider support before he continues on the path of expanded Palestinian self-rule government.

If the country is divided over a limited agreement that aims only to remove direct Israeli military occupation from half a dozen Palestinian cities or towns, we can imagine the more profound crisis that lies ahead when the time comes for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to assume greater control over the destiny of its people. The Israeli prime minister and his team of advisers went to great length throughout the Knesset debate on the second stage agreement, to assure the Israeli people that Israel will continue to enjoy effective control over the entire West Bank, including the Jordan Valley, and that a Palestinian state is not really in the offing.

This bottom line posture must be taken seriously and not as a mere political tactic aiming to win wider support for the Labour government. This last word on the future of Palestinian self-rule runs counter to the Palestinian yearning for independence and statehood, as was repeatedly reflected in the words of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and echoed recently by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa who stipulated the establishment of a Palestinian state is a sine qua non for regional peace.

Many Israeli opponents to a reasonable deal with the Palestinians, including members of the Likud Party, base their concerns, inter alia, on some references in the Palestinian charter that suggest the PLO maintain its claim on the entire Palestinian territory. Those opponents see in the creation of a Palestinian state the re-birth of a ghost and with it the resurrection of the Palestinian national claim to the whole of Palestine at one stage or another. Such people would rather not see a Palestinian state for fear of being haunted by it forever.

The Palestinian side, on the other hand, counters these Israeli fears by referring to various Zionist platforms and symbolisms that stake a claim to territories that extend, not only to the West Bank, but also to Arab lands beyond it. It would seem just and proper, therefore, that the Israeli side make the necessary denunciations of old Zionist dreams before it can expect similar assurances from the Palestinian side. Then, and only then, the two peoples can co-exist without real or imaginary fears of what the future may hold for them.

In any case, more needs to be done by both parties to win over hard-liners and sceptics still opposed to what has been painstakingly attained on the Palestinian front, unless of course such elements are only playing politics, intending to gain political power by first whipping up Palestinian and Israeli fears and then cashing in on such anxieties.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily drew attention to the concurrence of the Libyan leader's expulsion of Palestinians with a Libyan media campaign demanding the end to U.N. sanctions imposed on Tripoli. It is strange and shocking to see Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi use the sufferings of the Palestinian people as a tool to attract world attention to the need for lifting the sanctions, said the paper. Qadhafi's outrageous act, condemned by the world community, can by no means end the sanctions unless Libya hands over the two suspects for the downing of the Pan-Am plane (over Lockerbie in 1989); and the sufferings of the Palestinians will not end unless Israel opens its doors for them to return, stressed the daily. The deportation of the Palestinians to the desert and the deprivation of their basic needs is a shameful act that has no justification, except that Qadhafi is trying to draw the world attention to the sanctions to which his country has been demanding an end, added the daily. The paper said that the illogical and unpredictable behaviour of Qadhafi will not earn him the sympathy of the world, but will, instead, strengthen the belief that his country cannot be trusted when it claims it had nothing to do with the aircraft tragedy.

COMMENTING ON a report in one of the national weeklies that alleged Japan's financial aid to Jordan has been deposited in a secret account in Switzerland of a prominent Jordanian columnist Mohammad Subeih said that the government should take prompt action to verify the truth of this report. The columnist, who writes for Al Dustour, said the weekly's report that JD 50 million had been deposited in the bank, should not be taken lightly and investigation into the case should be launched immediately. If the investigation proves the report false, the paper should apologise and be discredited, but if it proves to be true then the suspected person should be tried for two times: for stealing JD 50 million from the Jordanian people and also for weakening Jordan's credibility before the world, said the writer. In numerous cases the world media has been instrumental in helping authorities uncover plots, robberies and many other crimes and therefore prompt action is required at the highest levels, demanded the writer, who added that whatever the outcome of the investigations, democracy will be enhanced and the country's credibility protected.

Jordanian Perspective

Jordan could be a Transatlantic bridge at MENA

By Dr. Musa Keilani

WE ARE three weeks away from a major event in our history - the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit. Our officials and media are very busy preparing for the Oct. 29-31 event, which, by all counts, holds out promises of being a landmark in our efforts for economic development and self-reliance after a very painful period.

We have been hearing Jordanian officials voicing high optimism of the outcome of the conference while diplomats appear to be divided over whether the event itself would witness the launching of multi-billion dollar projects.

We have heard scepticism from many that the summit may not turn out to be the event that many Jordanians want it to be. So then the question arises: What do Jordanians expect from the summit? Pledges of billions of dollars of aid to Jordan? Announcements that American, European and Japanese companies coming in with billions to invest in the Jordan Valley?

One really has to be naive to expect such results from the summit.

There are some realities that we have to accept and appreciate. Among them is the fact that the very onus of economic development being on the private sector, we cannot expect any major pronouncements of deals and contracts at the summit itself. The reason is simple: The private sector does not believe in diplomatic gestures. It takes consideration a multitude of factors, including the investment climate, bureaucracy, relevant legislation and enforcement, rate of return on investments and protection for capital, before making any decision to invest. The Amman summit could make little difference to them except of course that they would be looking for concrete signs of a government commitment to liberalisation of trade and economy. Other than that, the businessmen attending the summit would follow their own leads before deciding whether to come into Jordan with capital. As such, people looking for announcements of private sector investments in Jordan and the region would be disappointed. That is not to say that there will not be investments, but that such

decisions would be taken away from media limelight.

Of course, some decisions have already been taken, others might be advanced at the summit while yet some others are poised to reach agreements after the summit. But all these decisions depend largely upon how Jordan presents itself before, during and after the summit and what measures it adopts to further liberalise trade and economy and how quickly it implements these measures. That is on the government side. On the private sector side, it is largely upto our businessmen to convince their international counterparts of their ability to live up to expectations in terms of efficiency and innovation.

Having said that, however, we also have to recognise that the United States, the main driving force behind the effort to held the economic development of our region, has made some basic commitments. Translated into practical action, these would mean a minimum level of American-government assisted projects in Jordan.

That Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown will be leading the U.S. delegation to the summit reflects the seriousness with which the Clinton administration views its commitments to Jordan and the region. Coupled with that are the numerous meetings, workshops and roundtables that the U.S. embassy in Amman organised in the past months to bring together all interested parties in a bid to develop understanding between the American and Jordanian private sectors.

Added with that is the \$250 million allocation for the Middle East and North Africa that the Clinton administration has given to the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, which specialises in promoting American businesses outside the U.S. This amount has a multiplying effect in that it would be used to finance the capitalisation of up to 25 per cent of American equity in MENA projects.

Japan is expected to be another key player at the summit. Statements by Japanese leaders and officials clearly indicate Tokyo's understanding of the reality that many in the Middle East, particularly in Jordan, are

pinning hopes that the MENA summit would be the launching pad for economic development. We do not know yet what will the strength of the Japanese delegation, but we are highly hopeful that it would be a nature that fits in with our expectations that Japanese firms -- long known to be on the lookout for assembly plants and manufacturing facilities outside Japan -- will take a keen interest in the potential available in Jordan.

The pointed references to the U.S. and Japan does in now way play down the European role in the Middle East and North Africa. But let us accept it: The Europeans, as represented by the European Union, appear to have a divided approach to the MENA summit as an event. For many of the European Union countries, the main event is the Barcelona summit coming up in November rather than the Amman conference. That is understandable if only because these countries note that the European Union would be in firm control of the situation at the Barcelona event while the U.S. is the dominant factor in the Amman summit.

However, there need not be any contradiction between the two events. If anything, they could be complementary.

For starters, there are many areas where American firms lead the international scene just as the Europeans do in other areas. It would be a major accomplishment for us Jordanians if our private sector and economic experts are successful in pinpointing the areas of advantages and disadvantages of all sides.

However, the overriding factor -- away from the typical diplomatic U.S. vs. Europe approach -- remains that international businesses do not necessarily look at the nationality of their partners as long as the economic feasibility and returns on investments are guaranteed. That means, in effect, that Jordanian businesses could even be instrumental in bringing together European and American firms together on a Jordanian platform.

It is a challenge that faces us. Hopefully, we would be able to live up to it.

Writers blast Qadhafi over expulsion of Palestinians

THE WEEK IN PRINT

Reviewed by Elia Nasrallah

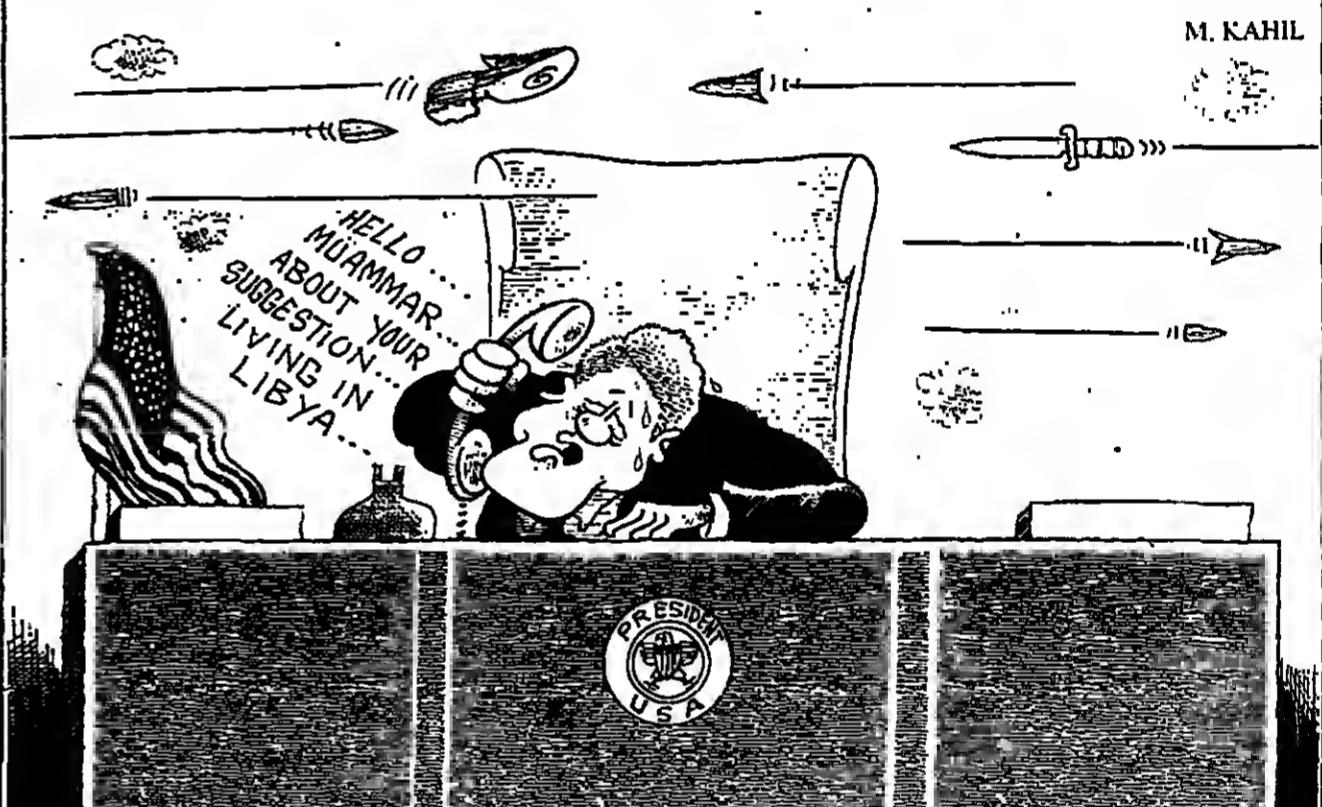
LIBYA'S continued expulsion of the Palestinians and the repercussions of the Israel-Palestine Taba agreement which was signed in Washington as well as a boss of domestic issues continued to dominate the local Arabic press in the past week.

Writing under the title of: The Fourth Exodus, Al Ra'i columnist Zuleikha Abu Rishesh said that the Libyan leader has found in the Palestinian-Israeli agreement which was signed in Washington as well as a boss of domestic issues continued to dominate the local Arabic press in the past week.

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said that the majority of Arab people are optimistic that they will see the Arab land returning in full to their legitimate owners in the long run noting that the agreement signed in Washington is bound to open the door for the Palestinians to regain their full rights step by step.

Commenting on the Palestine president's address at the White House signing of the Taba agreement, a writer in Al Dustour said that his call for making Jerusalem as the capital of world peace and a symbol of peace between the Palestinian and the Israeli people had had its impact on his audience and the world at large. Abdallah Al Qaq said that with his words Arashaf has conveyed to the world that the Palestinian leadership is totally committed to the peace process in deed rather than words. The writer said that the agreement constitutes a turning point in the life of both the Israelis and the Palestinians who have got tired of war and bloodshed and are opting for a permanent peace.

Commenting on Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's address at the white house ceremony for the signing of the Taba agreement, a writer in Al Ra'i said that Rabin has seized the opportunity in order to present to the world a picture of the Jews whom he claimed to be the victims of acts of terrorism. In his speech Rabin has referred to the buses that

were blown up by the Palestinian resistance as acts of terrorism while the world at large realises the fact that it is the Israelis who have been persecuting the Palestinians and committing all kinds of atrocities against them over the last 50 years. The writer said that while Rabin tried to deny the Palestinian people their right to resist occupation he painted a picture of the Jews as victims of terrorism and need sympathy and protection and support from the world. The world, said the writer, can never forget the massacres committed against the Palestinians at the hands of the Israelis who never lose a moment in their attempts to consolidate their occupation of Palestine and hegemony over the Arab region.

In Fahd Fanek's view, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' suggestion that a confederation be set up between the Palestinians and Jordan is aimed at including Jordan in addition to Palestine under the umbrella of Israeli domination. The columnist who writes for Al Ra'i daily said that with this suggestion Israel is also aiming at killing the Palestinian people's dream of establishing an independent Palestine state close to Israel. The writer also said that by creating a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation Israel is certain that the confederal government will make it impossible for any group to

launch attacks on Israel. He said with the Palestinians and the Jordanians forming a united confederal state, the long-time Israeli dream of finding a substitute homeland for the Palestinians would be fulfilled.

Saleh Qallab, a writer in Al Dustour, predicted that the U.S. administration will focus its attention to promote the peace process on the Israeli-Syrian track. Now that the Israeli-Palestinian agreement has been signed expanding the self-rule areas, the Americans are hopeful that the Syrians will be encouraged to come forward and step up efforts to reach an accord with Israel over the Golan, said the writer. In addition said the writer the Clinton administration is putting its weight behind the Amman economic summit in order to lead further support to the Taba agreement between Israel and the Palestinians and to lay the cornerstone for the new Middle East order in which all peoples and all states can work together for collective security and development. He said that the Americans are desperate to get Syria involved in the peace process because it is convinced that no lasting peace can be achieved in its absence.

A writer in Al Dustour warned against the execution of a court order on evicting the residents of Al Hussein refugee camp from their homes. Yasser Zaatreh reminded the government that the hundreds of thousands of people living in these camps hold full Jordanian nationality on the one hand and that they are refugees living in Jordan since the 1948 war on the other. The writer said since the fate of the 1948 refugees has been left for the final phase of the peace process, these people have the right to continue living in Jordan. He said that the government ought to find a way to guarantee the refugees the right to stay in their camps until a final decision has been taken on their fate and not to leave them as victims to their worries and facing the unknown.

Al Dustour columnist Fakhri Kawar commented on the recent killing of a government school student at the hands of his colleagues by saying that the schools are in need of social reform as much as the educational process in Jordan. He said that the public have been hearing reports about teachers beating students and of shameful acts of violence among the students, and finally murder, which shows a greater need for genuine reform. The writer said while investigations by the security services into the latest violence continue, the ministry of education is duty-bound to take its own action that will ensure safe and sound atmosphere for the students to learn and to be good citizens free of any tendency towards violence in their society.

Features

Knesset passes self-rule agreement

(Continued from page 1)

Under the accord, Israeli troops will gradually withdraw from Palestinian population centres in the West Bank to allow for wider self-rule and Palestinian elections.

In Palestinian-ruled Gaza, Mr. Arafat said he was not surprised by the Knesset's decision.

"This was expected. Actually, I can't imagine that they would refuse what we had agreed before," he told reporters. Asked when he thought Israeli redeployment would begin, Mr. Arafat said: "Within days."

Government opponents in Israel said the agreement

would pave the way for the establishment of a Palestinian state in all of the land seized in the 1967 Middle East war.

The close parliamentary vote and defection of two Labour members showed how support for Mr. Rabin's centre-left coalition has shrunk in the Knesset since the 1993 landmark accord with the PLO which established self-rule in Gaza and Jericho in May 1994.

That first agreement, reached after decades of enmity, received solid support in Israel's parliament, passing by a vote of 61-50.

"The leftist government, under the guise of implementing the autonomy plan... is waiting today for a

Palestinian state," opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu told parliament on Thursday. "Mr. Prime Minister, this is your vision."

Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Rabin are running neck-to-neck in Israeli opinion polls.

The Israeli cabinet and the PLO Executive Committee already endorsed the deal to extend autonomy, before Rabin and Mr. Arafat signed it in Washington. "This government has decided to give peace a chance," Mr. Rabin said at the start of the session on Thursday. He described the accord as "a major step in the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

He insisted that Israel would hold on to greater

Jerusalem, including the eastern sector, under a final settlement to be hammered out after the five-year period of interim Palestinian autonomy.

Israel would also keep the Jordan Valley and some settlements, notably near Bethlehem in the West Bank, the prime minister argued, over several interruptions from hecklers.

"The future border will be to the east of the ceasefire line of June 4, 1967," before the war in which Israel seized Arab Jerusalem as well as the West Bank and Gaza Strip, said Mr. Rabin.

The West Bank deal would lead to a separate "Palestinian entity... but less than a state," the prime minister reiterated.

Reports conflict over PNA-Hamas deal

(Continued from page 1)

latter "showed goodwill and released the prisoners as well as halted all oppressive measures against the movement."

But he said that Hamas would not be willing to stop its attacks, not even from PLO-ruled areas, because that would constitute the movement giving up one of its main strategic options.

Hamas' leaders abroad have adopted a much harder line than activists in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Even if an agreement is approved, Hamas might not be able to control rogue gunmen in its ranks.

Hamas is Mr. Arafat's main political rival and the leading opponent to the Israel-PLO autonomy agreements. It has carried out a series of suicide bus bombings in Israel in an attempt to derail the peace talks.

The bombings have killed dozens of Israelis over the past two years and have been largely responsible for eroding public support in Israel for the peace talks with the Palestinians.

Israeli Housing Minister

Binjamin Ben-Eliezer said Friday he was ready to give the group the benefit of the doubt. "Hamas, like the PLO, gets up tomorrow and says, 'I am turning over a new leaf,' we shouldn't just toss it aside," he told Israel Radio. "We have nothing to lose."

An official in Mr. Arafat's government said Friday that the agreement, if approved, could spell an end to Hamas attacks on Israelis.

As the PLO takes control of West Bank towns and villages over the next few months, the number of possible launching sites for Hamas attacks will be sharply reduced, said the official.

Sheikh Jamal Mansour, a Hamas leader in the West Bank town of Nablus, said any draft would have to be approved by the leadership abroad. He said that in principle, he supported an end to attacks.

"We are for conciliation and stability, and we want to participate in the political fabric," he said.

Hamas and PNA officials have been negotiating for months in an attempt to work

out the terms of political participation for Hamas.

The dialogue was interrupted repeatedly after Hamas carried out fresh bombings and PNA police rounded up the group's leaders in response.

However, the negotiations continued and several weeks ago, Hamas officials said they had taken secret steps to set up a political party ahead of Palestinian elections this spring.

In the latest signal of reconciliation, Mr. Arafat this week permitted the Hamas weekly Al Watan to resume publication. He had shut down the newspaper two months ago after it published an article critical of the PLO chairman.

A Hamas official said the Palestinian police had rounded up at least 30 activists of Hamas.

The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the arrests were made late Wednesday in the southern border town of Rafah. He said the police gave no explanation for their action.

No immediate confirmation was available from the Palestinian police.

Israel on Thursday asked the United States to extradite the political leader of Hamas.

Israel wants to try Abu Marzouk on charges of murder and conspiracy, said justice ministry spokeswoman Ety Eshed.

In its 900-page extradition request, Israel said Mr. Abu Marzouk was involved in planning several bus bombings, including explosions in 1994 in towns of Tel Aviv, Afula and Hadera that killed 37 people. Ms. Eshed said Israel submitted evidence linking Mr. Abu Marzouk directly to the blasts.

Mr. Abu Marzouk was detained at Kennedy International Airport on July 25 after his name showed up on a list of suspects. Mr. Abu Marzouk has lived in the United States for 14 years.

In August, the U.S. government began extradition proceedings against him, arresting him on Israeli charges of terrorism. A complaint unsealed at the hearing said Mr. Abu Marzouk is head of the Hamas political bureau, the top leadership group.

The next hearing is scheduled for Oct. 17.

ble progress.

Israel and the United States say Syria reneged on a deal to hold follow-up talks by lower-level military officers.

But Mr. Sharas called this just a "detail" and insisted "Syria was not the side that stalled negotiations."

In separate comments, Gen. Shihabi also warned of a fresh war in the region.

"What Israel wants is to resolve the problem its own way by perpetuating its occupation of Arab land, obliterating the legitimate Arab rights and reaching separate, fragile agreements that do not secure a solid base for a just and durable peace," Gen. Shihabi told the United Arab Emirates daily Al Bayan.

"This, in our opinion, will only lead to intensified Israeli aggression and permanent tension that increases the possibility of a fresh war."

Syria remains committed to the prospect of pursuing peace with the Jewish state.

With the new Israel-PLO accord as a backdrop, Washington has been aiming to break the impasse between Syria and Israel, the last major obstacle to a comprehensive Middle East peace.

But as Thursday's talks began, State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns held out little hope of an early breakthrough.

"Our expectations are that this is going to be very difficult," Mr. Burns said of prospects for getting Israel and Syria to resume direct talks on security issues.

U.S. officials are hoping the latest Israel-PLO pact will clear the way for all parties to refocus efforts on the Israeli-Syrian peace track after three months of no visible

Syria maintains hardline in talks

(Continued from page 1)

Syria remains committed to the peace process launched in October 1991.

After Thursday's talks with Mr. Christopher, Mr. Sharas said:

"We have agreed that we will continue discussions in order to find out what is the best way to resume peace talks between Syria and Israel."

He accused Israel of renegeing on previously agreed principles for security arrangements and reiterated Syrian opposition to an Israeli military presence on the Golan Heights.

"That is out of the question. No ground presence on the Golan Heights... this is in contradiction with the principles which we reached (with Israel) on security arrangements."

"The Syrian minister told reporters.

The principles include demilitarised zones, early warning systems and other items. Syria has rejected Israeli proposals for early warning posts on Syrian soil and proposed aerial surveillance instead, something Mr. Sharas mentioned on Thursday.

"Syria believes there can never be a just, comprehensive peace in the region without full withdrawal of Israel from the Golan Heights to the line of June 4, 1967, and from south of Lebanon... these are the bases on which we can resume the peace talks," he said.

Despite the lack of an agreement to resume negotiations with Israel, Mr. Sharas described his talks with Mr. Christopher as good and constructive and insisted

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Fighting in Bosnia for pre-truce gains

(Continued from page 1)

join those of our allies under NATO command with clear rules of engagement."

Russia, welcoming the Bosnian ceasefire agreement, hinted that a way may be worked out to allow the Russian military to take part in a NATO-led peace force.

As NATO defence ministers met to discuss ways of tying Russia into the peace implementation force, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev was quoted as saying that Russia "should not be alienated."

President Boris Yeltsin threw his backing behind the ceasefire shortly after it was announced on Thursday, saying the main thing was for it to be strictly observed once it came into effect next Tuesday.

U.N. officials in Zagreb said that about 1,000 Croatian army soldiers had crossed the border into Bosnia's northwestern Bihać enclave, heightening the chances of a new flareup with rebel Serbs. On Thursday, they

had reported 100 Croatian soldiers in the region.

Croatian troops were crucial to a joint government-Croat offensive that won back wide swaths of territory from the Serbs during recent months. Croatia is not a party to the ceasefire, but Mr. Holbrooke said in Zagreb Thursday that Croatian "participation has been indispensable" in reaching it.

Troops continued jockeying for position in northwest Bosnia. Bosnian Serb

television reported late Thursday that Serb fighters advancing on government-held Kličevac had entered the town, 140 kilometres northwest of Sarajevo. The United Nations could not confirm that Friday, saying it had no presence in the region.

As a sign of expectations for the accord, the United Nations announced it would soon begin reducing its peacekeeping force in Bosnia by about one-third, to 21,000 troops. U.N. officials in Sarajevo said Friday the first pullouts should start by the end of the month.

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"We call on our brother

Moammar Qadhafi to go back immediately on his unjustifiable decision," the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) said in a statement.

French television quoted police sources as saying Friday's blast was likely of criminal origin, but that the explosion was not as powerful as previous bombings that shook France since July.

But officials said the explosion came from a gas canister loaded with nuts and bolts, similar to others planted since July.

A mailman discovered a suspicious bag in the trash and alerted police who cordoned off the area, but the explosion took place in a court case over a cult land transaction.

Mr. Joyu, whose boyish good looks and frequent television appearances have gained him a following of young Japanese women, has led the cult since its leader, Shoko Asahara, was arrested May 16 for allegedly masterminding a March 20 nerve gas attack on Tokyo subways. Mr. Asahara's trial starts Oct. 26.

Cult leader is detained

(Continued from page 1)

come the cult's most visible member and its de facto leader, for what reports said was involvement with perjury in a court case over a cult land transaction.

We deplore these expulsions, especially since we were expecting Qadhafi to announce during his press conference relations between the two peoples and humanitarian and judicial considerations."

Qadhafi, which opposes the Israel-PLO autonomy accords, said: "The way the Libyan authorities are going about the expulsion of Palestinians is likely to increase the pressure on the Palestinian people and force them to accept an unjust settlement."

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This young Afghan girl (above) stepped on a mine near her village and the Cambodian child below leads his cattle through the mine field surrounding his village (ICRC photo)



The landmines carnage

THE REVIEW Conference of the 1980 U.N. Weapons Convention (1980 United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects) is currently being held in Vienna to discuss proposed amendments as recommended by the Group of Governmental Experts.

The group of 30 specialists (experts in defence technology, policy advisers, members of various research institutes, scientists, military officers and legal experts) held four preparatory meetings in February, May, and August 1994 and finally in January 1995 and designed recommendations for the Vienna Review Conference later this month to be discussed by all participating governments. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was named special rapporteur to the group of experts, in view of its capacity as guardian of the Geneva Conventions and the international humanitarian law (IHL) which aim at providing protection and assistance to the victims of armed conflicts.

The 1980 U.N. Weapons Convention has the purpose of codifying and developing specific rules on the use of weapons, either by totally prohibiting the use of certain weapons, or by regulating their use, so that the customary principles of IHL on the use of weapons are given concrete expression in treaty form. However, in many respects this convention has not achieved its aim, not only because it has been insufficiently ratified or implemented, but also because in many ways it does not provide the means needed to prevent the excessive damage that is actually being caused in armed conflicts. In particular, the convention relies too extensively on regulating behaviour in relation to the use of certain weapons, which is frequently difficult to enforce, rather than prohibiting the use of certain

types of weapons altogether.

Anti-personnel landmines and the likely development of laser weapons can seriously hinder the ability of a country to rebuild its postwar economy. Landmines could be easily planted around vital economic installations during wartime, but the costly and time consuming clearing of landmines would delay the recovery of the economy, disrupt transportation, lessen exports and endanger economic development.

At the present, there are around 100 million anti-personnel mines littered throughout the world. 33 million of them are scattered in Arab and Islamic countries.

The use of landmines has in the past decades resulted in an acute human tragedy. Apart from the appalling number of casualties they cause, anti-personnel mines inflict the most horrific wounds, strike blindly at all human beings alike and continue to spread terror for decades after hostilities have ended.

More than 250 million landmines, including approximately 200 million anti-personnel landmines have been manufactured over the past 25 years in more than 50 countries. According to U.N. estimates, landmines kill more children than soldiers. Around 800 lives, mostly civilians, are claimed by landmines every month and deprive many thousands more of limbs or eyesight. Many of these casualties occur years after hostilities have ceased. But still, more anti-personnel landmines continue to be produced at an average rate of 5 to 10 million per year.

Hundreds of thousands of people around the world, mostly civilians, have lost their limbs as a result of mine injuries. For many mine amputees, the price of an artificial limb is far beyond reach. According to an ICRC field evaluation, a prosthesis for a child should be replaced every six months, and for an adult every three to five years. A 10-year-old child with a life expectancy of another 40 to 50 years will need 25 prostheses. At a cost of \$125 per each prosthesis, a child will spend \$3,125 on artificial limbs in his or her lifetime. In countries where average incomes are only \$10-15 a month, it is easy to see why prostheses are considered a luxury.

The effects on community life can be devastating. With peace, communities already shattered by war must rebuild their homes and villages, find new pastures and farmland, and seek out new markets for their goods. Yet landmines can seriously hinder the ability of a country to rebuild its postwar economy. Landmines could be easily planted around vital economic installations during wartime, but the costly and time consuming clearing of landmines would delay the recovery of the economy, disrupt transportation, lessen exports and endanger economic development.

The ICRC is convinced that the only clear and effective means of ending the suffering inflicted on civilians by anti-personnel landmines is their total prohibition. As a matter of fact, any set of partial measures short of the total ban, fall far short of the goal of protecting civilians from the indiscriminate effects of mines and are likely to result in continued civilian carnage for many years to come. Therefore, the ICRC appeals for the support of its initiative to be

AFM invigorated ahead of MENA

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Turnover and prices at the Amman Stock Market edged up this week, with investor enthusiasm riding high ahead of this month's Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic summit, brokers said Thursday.

The main gains were posted in the commercial banking sector as several banks have announced registering strong performances in the first eight months of the year.

Turnover for the week ending Thursday was JD 10.3 million, up nearly 10 per cent from the previous week and prices closed moderately higher.

The weekly report of the Amman Financial Market (AFM) said the general price index based on 60 major companies from among the 120 listed in the market closed at 160.4 points, up 0.7

points or 0.4 per cent higher for the week.

The market report said 4.6 million shares changed hands during the week under 4,001 contracts concluded during the week, and average daily trading registered JD 2.1 million compared with JD 1.9 million last week.

Commercial banks and financial institutions led sectoral trading with a volume of JD 5.36 million, followed by industries with JD 3.61 million, the services sector with JD 1.2 million and insurances stocks with JD 160,000.

The banking sector index gained 1.2 per cent, insurance went down by 0.4 per cent, industrial declined by 0.6 per cent and services slipped by 1.5 per cent.

The week's business saw stocks of 90 companies changing hands; 28 of them closed for the week with gains while 50 slipped and the prices of 12 remained un-

changed.

Brokers said investors were attracted by signs that the commercial banks would be doing booming business in financing projects in the country stemming from the Oct. 29-31 MENA summit.

"The effect of the recent Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) decision to allow local banks to lend in foreign currency from their foreign exchange deposits is showing strongly in the market now," said an AFM dealer.

According to CBJ officials, the move was aimed at letting local banks to gain better from their deposits held in foreign banks by using the funds to finance local projects with foreign participation.

Jordanian banks, which hold more than four billion dinars in total deposits, have about \$2.8 billion of the funds of foreign currency accounts.

U.S. issues new currency, old currency remains valid

THE U.S. Department of the Treasury announced on September 27 that new \$100 notes will be issued in early 1996. Lower denominations will be introduced later at approximately six-to-12-month intervals.

The Treasury Department also pointed out that, although the design change is being made for security reasons, only about one one-hundredth of 1 per cent of U.S. currency in circulation is found to be counterfeit and 90 per cent of all known counterfeit U.S. currency is seized before it reaches the public. Federal Reserve banks are currently authorised to issue notes in denominations of \$1, \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100.

The process of replacing old currency is fairly simple. When banks and other depository institutions need to replenish their supply of currency, such as when the public's need for cash increases during holiday shopping periods, these institutions

order the cash from the Federal Reserve and the face value of that cash is charged to their accounts at the Federal Reserve. In this way new currency can be introduced into the banking system and old currency removed.

In addition, as part of their responsibility for maintaining the physical quality of U.S. paper currency in circulation, each day the Federal Reserve and Department of the Treasury carefully scrutinise millions of dollars of deposits at Federal Reserve Banks. Worn or mutilated notes are removed from circulation and destroyed. Counterfeit notes are forwarded to the U.S. Secret Service, an agency of the Treasury Department.

The \$100 note is the most common foreign-produced counterfeit note and the \$20 note is the most common domestically produced counterfeit note.

Design changes

The most significant visual

difference between the new notes and the old notes will be the portrait. The new note portrait will be larger, allowing more detail to be incorporated, and thus easier to recognise. Also, the portrait will be moved slightly off-centre, which will provide room for a watermark that will depict the same historical figure as the engraved portrait. The watermark, which does not copy on colour copiers, will have both darker and lighter areas when held up to the light. Moving the portrait away from the centre, the area of highest wear, will reduce wear on the portrait.

The currency also will include concentric fine-line patterns that appear normal to the human eye but are difficult for current digital electronic scanning equipment to properly resolve. These scanners have been a counterfeiting threat because when used with advanced colour copiers and printing equipment, they can produce fine detail reproductions, the department

said. The ink used in the new notes changes colour when viewed from different angles. It appears black when viewed directly and changes to green when the note is tilted.

Other pre-existing security

features will remain. These include a thin thread or ribbon running through a bank note's underlying layers that glows red when viewed under an ultraviolet light, and microprinting that appears as a thin line to the naked eye but can be read with a low-power magnifier.

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing will provide machine manufacturers with new notes so they can prepare vending machines, automatic teller machines and other cash-handling equipment. While machine manufacturers will have to make modifications to accommodate the new bills, they will have a broader field of machine-readable features from which to choose to authenticate currency, the department said.

The department said that it cost about \$765,000 to develop the new design. In addition, each currency note costs slightly less than 4 cents to produce.

In 1995, the Bureau of

Engraving and Printing will produce about 9,000 million

notes worth about \$129,000 million. About 95 per cent

will replace unfit notes and 5 per cent will support economic growth, the department said.

United States Information Service.

Iraq, Russia discuss oilfield development

BAGHDAD (R) — An Iraqi oil delegation is in Moscow to follow up contracts signed last April for the development of Iraqi oilfields, the official newspaper Al Iraq said on Friday.

and a number of specialised oil companies, including the execution of the agreement to develop the oilfields of Gharb Al Qurna One and Two, and other projects included in the agreements.

Last April, Iraq announced it had signed a deal with Russia to further develop two giant oilfields in southern Iraq — West Qurna and north Rumaila — which have the potential to produce one million barrels per day.

The agreement, which included other cooperation in the gas and oil industry, would take effect only after the end of U.N. sanctions imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1995

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll Righter
Astrological Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't permit a private worry to depress you in the morning, and later this evening you can come to a better understanding with your mate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Avoid a new contact who can be troublesome in the morning, and later this evening you have fine rapport with a business partner.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Avoid the public in the morning and later tonight plan your activities for the days ahead wisely so that you can expand.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Stick to plans made and don't go off on any tangents, and later today you can have a wonderful time, especially at amusements.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Don't disagree over some bill in the morning today, and then you can handle home affairs more wisely with your loved ones.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be very careful in motion in the morning while on the highway, and after lunch you can see good friends and enjoy hobbies together.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Get your environment more as you prefer it to be in the morning today, then study financial affairs which are important.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Carry through with activities ahead of you and don't use time foolishly. This evening can be very pleasurable for you and loved ones.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't get flustered today if conditions are not as you want them to be at your home, and later tonight you can have fun with loved ones.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't make cutting remarks in the morning, and later this evening you can enjoy the company of good friends and fellow associates.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Early today be careful in spending money and then later tonight you can accomplish a good deal of success in the business world.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You may feel discontented in the morning but can soon go out later tonight and get into interesting outlets and you can become happy.

Birthstone of October: Opal — Tourmaline

G7 to promise more action to aid world economy

WASHINGTON (R) — Policymakers from rich industrial nations are expected to declare on Saturday that the crisis-prone world economy is on the mend and to promise that they will take further action to make sure it stays that way.

Officials from the powerful Group of Seven (G7) industrial nations said that will mean working together to keep the dollar strong and acting on their own to put their economies in better shape, in most cases by cutting bloated government budget deficits.

"We're going to see solid growth (in 1996)," U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin said. "(But) anybody who is complacent simply doesn't understand (the outlook)."

The G7 gathering — which brings together finance ministers and central bank chiefs from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — will take place on the fringes of the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

The IMF has forecast that world economic growth will pick up next year to 4.1 per cent from 3.7 per cent this year and 3.6 per cent in 1994. The outlook though did not always look so bright.

In an interview on Reuters Financial Television, the IMF

chief even said that a small further rise of the dollar would be welcome.

"The United States wants a strong dollar," U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers said. "It's something we're working with other countries to bring about."

The currency markets though are betting that the G7 will not put its money where its mouth is and back up its calls for a strong dollar with further dollar purchases in the currency market. That's one reason why the dollar slipped below 100 yen on Thursday, from a high last month of close to 105.

Interviewed Thursday on CNN's Moneyline television programme, Mr. Summers though warned the markets against betting against the G7.

At their meeting on Saturday, G7 policymakers are also expected to discuss ways to combat future Mexico-style economic crises by establishing a \$50 billion war chest at the IMF.

The United States and its industrial nation allies are already committed to providing the IMF with \$25 billion in emergency funds. But they want to double that, partly through contributions from the emerging economic powerhouses of Asia.

Kuwait fund pays 6% cash for first half 95

KUWAIT (R) — First Investment Fund, the first Kuwaiti stock market investment vehicle open to foreigners, will pay a cash dividend of six per cent for the first half of 1995, fund Manager Kuwait Investment Company (KIC) has said.

KIC official Assad Al Benwan said by telephone the payout worth 1.5 million dinars (\$5 million) would be made next week.

The net value of the fund's assets rose by 11.8 per cent in the six months to June 30, finishing at 1,141 dinar (\$3.8) per unit compared to 1,020 dinar (\$3.4) per unit on January 1.

Mr. Benwan noted this had outperformed the Kuwait stock exchange price index which rose 8.8 per cent during the period.

Foreigners based either in

Kuwait or overseas may buy units in the fund, which invests in a basket of companies on the Gulf country's exchange. It is the country's first mutual fund and the first instrument to invest on the exchange to allow participation by foreigners.

Only nationals of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states of the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait may directly buy shares on the exchange.

Mr. Benwan said exchange activity and share values had risen due to a string of privatisations and hopes of an easing of settlement terms for longstanding private sector bad debt.

Mr. Benwan said between 800 and 850 investors had bought units in the closed-end fund launched in mid-1994 to create investment

opportunities for small investors.

The fund has a capital of 25 million dinars (\$83 million), a 15-year term and permits investors to redeem their holdings five years after launch of the fund.

The fund is listed on the exchange and KIC has said it trades at a slight discount to the net asset value per unit. There is a management fee of 1.125 per cent, KIC has said.

The custodian of the fund is Kuwait and Middle East Financial Investment Company, a subsidiary of Bank of Kuwait and the Middle East BKME, K.E. The net asset value of the fund stood this week at 1,277 dinar (\$4.25).

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valid

Business Daily Beat

A review of economic news from the Arabic press

ment. While machine manufacturers will have to amend the new bill to include a broader field which to choose to accept currency, the department said that about \$705,000 in design, each currency note slightly less than 3 cents reduce.

In 1995, the Bureau of Printing and Mintage will issue about 9,000 million worth about \$120 million. About 95 per cent place unit notes and 5 per cent will support economic, the department said. (U.S. Information

discuss

ment

number of special companies, including the execution of the projects of Gharr Al Quine and Two, and projects included in agreements."

On April 1, Iraq announced it had signed a deal with Russia to further develop two giant oilfields in southern Iraq — West and north Rumaila which have the potential to produce one million barrels per day.

A agreement, which ended other cooperation in the gas and oil industry, would take only after the end of U.N. sanctions imposed Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990.

OROSCOPE

CAST FOR SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1995

Thomas S. Pellerin

Astronomer

S: (March 21 to April 19) You'll permit a private to depress you in the beginning, and later this event can come to a better standing with your

US: (April 20 to May 18) A new contact who is troublesome in the beginning, and later this event can come to a better standing with your

NI: (May 19 to June 17) You'll void the public in the beginning, and later this event can come to a better standing with your

NI: (June 18 to July 16) Stick to plans and don't go off on any, and later this event can come to a better standing with your

S: (July 17 to August 14) You'll disagree over some bill in the beginning, and a can handle home affairs wisely with your loved ones.

S: (August 15 to September 12) Be very careful in the morning and in the afternoon, and much you can see good and enjoy hobbies.

O: (September 13 to October 20) You'll be very careful in the morning and in the afternoon, and much you can see good and enjoy hobbies.

O: (October 21 to November 18) Carry through projects ahead of you, and use time wisely, revenue can be very valuable for you and loved ones.

O: (November 19 to December 16) Don't get today if conditions as you want them to be home, and later you can have fun with ones.

ICORN: (December 17 to January 24) Don't make remarks in the morning and later this evening to enjoy the company of friends and fellow

TARIUS: (January 25 to February 22) Early today you'll be spending money in the morning to accomplish a good deal of in the business world.

S: (February 23 to March 20) You may feel disturbed in the morning but go out later tonight into interesting ventures that can become hap-

Municipal councils urged to establish public libraries, parks

Minister of

Municipal and

Rural Affairs and

the Environment Nader

Thubeir said his ministry

will not endorse any mu-

nicipal budget in the future

unless the budget includes

allocations for the estab-

lishment of a public library

and parks. Speaking at a

meeting with the mayor of

Salt and members of the

city's municipal council,

Mr. Thubeir called on

municipal councils around

the Kingdom to enrol

citizens in drawing

municipal plans and called

for setting up

neighbourhood committees

to aid municipal councils

in their works. He also

called on municipalities to

benefit from the role of the

armed forces and to collaborate with each other in

setting up joint service

councils to be able to share

machinery and cut on expenses.

He said the Industrial Development Bank (IDB) has decided to

buy up to 50 per cent of

the shares of any development

project carried out by any

municipality in the Kingdom.

He also said municipalities have to work on their own to resolve their problems and face challenges. (Al Dustour)

* The Middle East Technology fair (METS. 95) will open on the grounds of the Amman International Expo Oct. 18.

Some 25 Jordanian and foreign companies will take part in the fair, organised by the Jordan Computers Society. (Al Rai)

* Director General of the Development and Employment Fund (DEF) Ali Quba'a said the fund was ready to provide job seekers with loans worth between JD 1,000 and JD 10,000 to enable them to start income-generating, productive projects.

Speaking at a meeting of labour and employment departments around the Kingdom, Mr. Quba'a said the fund has thus far financed 2,025 projects worth JD 13 million. (Al Rai)

* The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources has taken responsibility for the country's electrification project which was earlier managed by the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA). JEA Director General Mohammad Saeed Arafah said, Mr. Arafah said the measure to separate the project from the authority and annex it to the ministry was carried out following a recent Council of Ministers meeting approving turning JEA into a public shareholding company owned by the government. Mr. Arafah said the authority has carried out the first phase of the project which entailed extending electricity lines to 240 villages at a total cost of JD 16,873,000.

GENEVA (AP) — Major trading nations sit down Friday to try to pull together a global pact which would open the \$513 billion telecommunications market to international competition.

A deal would lower prices, improve services and help regulate the rapidly expanding industry, negotiators say.

"Success in these negotiations is critical to the trading system," said Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Jeffrey Lang.

"The telecommunications revolution is taking place on a global basis. Failure would leave us without global rules on worldwide telecommunications connections," he said.

Tunisian drought causes growth rate revision

TUNIS (R) — Tunisia, hit by drought for the second year running, has revised down its 1995 economic growth forecast.

Gross domestic product (GDP) is now expected to grow by four per cent compared to a 6.3 per cent budget forecast earlier this year, according to an Economic Development Ministry report obtained by Reuters.

But the forecast for 1995 is higher than the 1994 growth rate which was 3.4 per cent and the 1993 rate of 2.3 per cent.

The revision was mainly caused by a revision in the expected agriculture growth rate to 6.3 per cent from 9.2 per cent. Manufacturing growth will be 5.6 per cent instead of 5.8 per cent.

Cereal harvests and rainfall are important factors in Tunisia's GDP, and the crop is expected to drop to 0.62 million tonnes, well short of the budget target of 1.6 million tonnes, the report added.

Olive oil production is also expected to drop to 607,000 tonnes compared to 75,000 tonnes in 1994 and 210,000 tonnes in 1993. Tunisia is the world's second largest exporter.

The annual report on economic development said the balance of payments current deficit is expected to rise to 697 million dinars (\$733.6 million) instead of an earlier forecast of 674 million dinars (\$709.4 million) because of higher food imports.

Imports of food in 1995 will be 735 million dinars (\$773.6 million) instead of a budget forecast of 590 million dinar (\$621 million).

Financial Markets in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 5/10/1995

Currency	Mid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7150	0.7140
Sterling Pound	1.1279	1.1335
Deutsche Mark	0.9160	0.9155
Swiss Franc	0.6173	0.6104
French Franc	0.1433	0.1440
Japanese Yen*	0.7065	0.7100
Dutch Guilder	0.4410	0.4452
Swedish Krona
Italian Lira*	0.0441	0.0443

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3386/96	1.4224/34	1.5930/40	1.1402/12	29.27/31	4.9838/88	1614.0/5.5	100.24/34	7.0030/30	6.2870/20	5.5278/78
One sterling	\$1.5828/38
One ounce of gold	\$382.85/383.35

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World trade body attempts to pry open telecommunications

The top 25 telecommunications companies in the world command a revenue of \$770 billion — 6 per cent of the global economy.

Altogether 42 nations out of more than 120 members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) are taking part.

The Friday negotiations in-

clude for the first time top-level trade and telecom experts. They will assess each country's market-opening offers and will try to map out a strategy for conclusion of the talks by the April deadline.

The U.S. offer, the most liberal put forward so far, would "lock open virtually every aspect of the U.S. basic telecom market," said Mr.

Lang. It was welcomed by WTO Director-General Renato Ruggiero as giving a "very powerful lead" to the negotiations.

"We undertook this ambitious offer to demonstrate that we are prepared to commit ourselves fully to liberalisation, if we receive reciprocal concessions from the rest of the world," said Mr.

Lang. He said the United States accepted that some developing countries may need some time to phase in liberalisation.

The European Union submitted its proposal just this week after missing several earlier deadlines.

Its offer would open all 15 EU countries to foreign competition but limit foreign

ownership of companies in Belgium to 49 per cent, in Portugal and Spain to 25 per cent and in France to 20 per cent.

"We are prepared to negotiate on these restrictions provided we find matching concessions from other countries," said EU negotiator Karl Falkenberg.

Mr. Falkenberg said he was optimistic a pact could be

reached.

"I think there is a genuine desire to move on these negotiations," he said.

"We all realise that the industry wants and needs more open markets."

Nine other countries including Japan, Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Mexico have also submitted offers to the negotiating group.

JAMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - BRIGGS
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607172
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (20/09/1995 - 04/10/1995)
WEEKLY REPORT

COMPANY'S NAME	TRADING VOLUME JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	OPENING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PIG	2,752,845	241.500	242.500	247.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	91,114	4.530	4.520	4.450
BAK OF JORDAN	44,044	2.500	2.500	3.510
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK	176,729	2.250	1.250	1.280
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	31,459	1.400	2.400	2.240
THE HOUSING BANK	11,925	5.300	5.200	5.300
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	14,121	2.770	2.770	2.780
JORDAN GULF BANK	814,222	1.150	1.150	1.200
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	67,227</td			

Klinsmann fit for Germany's European qualifying double

BONN (R) — World Cup star Juergen Klinsmann will be fit to lead Germany into two European Championship qualifiers within four days in the next week but the former world champions are still battling injury problems.

Klinsmann, knocked unconscious in a collision during a league match for Bayern Munich at the weekend, has recovered in time for Sunday's group seven clash with Moldova in Leverkusen.

But coach Berti Vogts was forced to omit injured midfielder Mario Basler and defender Stefan Reuter from the 18-man party due at their training camp near Bonn Thursday night.

Both players will miss Sunday's game and next Wednesday's qualifier against Wales in Cardiff where the Germans hope to make sure of their place at next year's finals in England.

"Stefan's withdrawal is tough since he is in such good form at the moment," Vogts said. "(but) if we win both games we are almost certain of making the finals in England."

Vogts has chosen a squad based around the country's top clubs, Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund. Dortmund's Libero Matthias Sammer and striker Heiko Herrlich return to the squad after missing last month's 4-1 victory over Georgia.

As the qualifying stage moves into its crucial stage in the next month, Germany stand second in the

group, three points behind Bulgaria and four points ahead of third-placed Georgia.

Bulgaria look likely to go through as group winners to the 16-team finals. But the top six second-placed teams from the eight groups also qualify with the two teams from the other two groups playing off for the last place.

England complete the field as hosts.

Although Germany are well-placed to go through with ease, Vogts on Thursday hit out at the qualifying format under which only the results against the top four teams in the group count when the rankings of the second-placed teams are decided.

Under this system, Germany's results this week could become irrelevant if Wales and Moldova stay in fifth and sixth respectively.

"I don't like this system. It's not fair on these teams that their efforts have no influence at the end of the day," Vogts said. "You have to ask who thought up this system."

German squad:
Goalkeepers: Oliver Kahn, Andreas Koepke
Defenders: Markus Babbel, Thomas Helmer, Jürgen Kobler, Matthias Sammer, Christian Ziege
Midfielders: Dieter Eilts, Steffen Freund, Thomas Haessler, Andy Moeller, Mehmet Scöll, Thomas Strunz

Forwards: Fredi Bobic, Heiko Herrlich, Ulf Kirsten, Juergen Klinsmann, Stefan Kuntz



Juergen Klinsmann

Woman soccer referee wins right to officiate

LONDON (AP) — A 26-year-old woman has won a landmark settlement from an English Soccer allowing her to officiate matches.

Georgina Christoforou was awarded an undisclosed sum in an out-of-court settlement announced Wednesday after she took the South East Counties League to court.

"This is the first time that any football league has been required to operate a policy of selection which is fair and doesn't discriminate against women," said Jane Deighton, the woman's lawyer. "It's a milestone for women in

referees and linesmen who work games in England's four most important leagues — the premier league and the first, second and third divisions.

She identified the lone woman as Wendy Toms, who began working first division matches last season as a linesman. Tomlinson said Toms had never worked in one of the top four leagues.

South East Counties League attorney Kenneth Goldman described the award as "modest" and said it was settled out of court to save expenses.

Asked why Bohinen had opted to leave, Clark threw a handful of coins onto a table and said, "I'm sure that's

Bohinen joins Rovers

BLACKBURN, England (AP) — Norwegian international Lars Bohinen completed a £700,000 (\$1.1 million) transfer Thursday from Nottingham Forest to struggling Premier League champions Blackburn Rovers.

Because of an escape clause in the 29-year-old midfielder's contract, Blackburn saved almost £2 million (\$3.1 million) on the deal signed at Ewood Park.

In today's inflated transfer market, Forest would have expected a fee of around £2.5 million (\$3.9 million) for Bohinen.

Forest manager Frank Clark was furious at the circumstances of Bohinen's departure.

Asked why Bohinen had opted to leave, Clark threw a handful of coins onto a table and said, "I'm sure that's

why. I don't know of any other reason. They must have offered him more money than we did in our new contract.

"I have to say I'm disappointed in Lars, very disappointed. I feel let down. Betrayed might be a bit strong but I feel let down. I think our supporters will be as well because they loved him."

"We've been trying to negotiate a new contract with him for a long time — to get rid of the clause — but his demands were just totally over the top. The money he wanted to buy it out was totally unacceptable."

The deal has been shrouded in controversy, with rumours circulating that it involved Rune Hauge, the Norwegian agent banned by FIFA.

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NO	CODE	JOB DESCRIPTION	QUALIFICATIONS	EXPERIENCE
1-	2.2	Sales engineer	B.Sc Mechanical eng. Suitable university technical degree	3 to 5 years in the field 3 years in the local market. With valid UAE driving licence.
2-	3.2	Purchaser	B.Sc Civil/mechanical	Min.5 years in the design of above mentioned products using autocad system
3-	4.2	Design engineer	B.Sc Commerce	5 years in the field
4-	5.2	Accountant	University degree	
5-	8.1	Security and Industrial safety	University degree	
6-	7.2	Personal dep. Officer	Universit degree	5 years in UAE , with UAE valid driving licence
7-	12.1	Q.C. engineer	B.Sc Mechanical	5 years in the field applying ISO 9000
8-	13.1	Accommodation in-charge	University degree	Min. 5 years in the field

After controversy, Italy gearing up for qualifying match with Croatia

MILAN, Italy (AP) — Following a war of words over the venue, Italy gearing up for the real test against Croatia in a crucial qualifying match of the European Championship.

Sunday's match at Split, likely to decide the qualifiers of group four for the final round of the European competition, was preceded by a bitter controversy over Italy's initial reluctance to play in Croatia.

Claims by the Italian Soccer Federation that safety of players could be at risk in a warring country touched off angry protests by the Croat side. A UEFA ruling forced Italy to accept the original site of the match.

After much talking about safety, no special security was being planned by the Italian team for the trip to Croatia.

"I'm glad that it's time to think of playing," Italian coach Arrigo Sacchi said Thursday. "We are going to face a strong team and must concentrate on the game."

The dispute about the site was not the only problem for Sacchi before the match between the group leader and runner-up Italy.

The Italian coach was upset by the decision of Juven-

itus striker Gianluca Vialli to turn down the call for his return to the national team.

Meanwhile, key forward Roberto Baggio was sidelined by a thigh strain and centre-forward Pier Luigi Casiraghi of Lazio was compulsorily dropped from the national team following a suspension received for his misbehaviour in a league game.

Italy, losing finalist Brazil in the 1994 World Cup final, enters Sunday's match with a record of 5-1-1 and 16 points

three points less than Croatia, which caused Italy's only loss in their first-game in Palermo, Sicily.

"Croatia can play for a draw. We must seek a victory to avenge the first-leg defeat and boost our qualifying chances," Sacchi said.

Sacchi's call for a victory seemed an indirect reply to suggestion by Croat captain Zvonimir Boban that both on Sunday would satisfy both sides.

The two top teams in each group qualify for the final round and Croatia and Italy are likely to finish 1-2 in Group Four, which also includes Lithuania, Ukraine, Slovenia and Estonia.

Italy completes its qual-

Cantona out of French national team

PARIS (AP) — Former captain Eric Cantona will not be a member of the French national team as the squad for the Oct. 11 European Championship qualifying match against Romania was named Thursday by the French Soccer Federation.

Aime Jacquet, the French coach, said before banded that Cantona, Jean-Pierre Papin, Patrice Loko and Nicolas Ouedec would not be selected and Jacquet held firm to his word.

"I am obliged to expand my list to those players in form in the crucial sector on the point of attack and the fact of the absence of Jean-Pierre Papin, Nicolas Ouedec and Patrice Loko," said Jacquet.

Reports out of Brazil suggest Arsenal's Premier League rival Middlesbrough may be leading the hunt and has offered about £4.4 million (\$7 million) for the transfer.

Portuguese club FC Porto is also in the running with manager Bobby Robson having spent several days in Brazil trying to work out a deal.

Arsenal, tied for sixth in the Premier League behind leader Newcastle, would like to add Juninho at midfield with David Platt and Dutch international striker Dennis Bergkamp.

Cantona was stripped of his national captaincy after the kung fu affair. France has suffered since then, baving a

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANIAH HIRSCH

DERRING-DO ACROSS THE GREEN BAIZE

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
A 5 4 3
V A 7
0 K 8 8
+ A Q 10 9 4
WEST
1 5 5 2
0 J 10 9 8
0 J 10 9 8
0 J 10
+ 7 2 2
EAST
4 9 9 8
0 9 8 8
0 9 7 6
4 8 8 5
SOUTH
A K 7
V K Q 6 4
0 A Q 4 2
4 K 3

The bidding:

NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1 Pass 1 Pass
2 0 Pass 6 NT Pass
5 V Pass
Pass Pass

Chances of a diamond split are about one in three. You can't afford to test diamonds immediately because, if the suit doesn't divide evenly, the fourth diamond might be in the hand with the ace of spades. Guessing the spade position is a 50-50 proposition.

However, that doesn't mean

it is a pure guess which spade you can play from hand when you had low from the top.

East contributes a low spade. An expert will go up with the King for three good reasons: the ace could be with East; if West does not have both the ace and queen, the defender might duck when you play the King; and if West does not have the ace when he has the ace with the ace, you still get the chance to test the diamonds, or a squeeze might develop.

After capturing South's King of spades with the ace, West reverted to hearts. Derrin bid out the heart and launched into Blackwood, intending to maneuver the contract hand-free. East had no spades but had an ace too few. You wisely chose six no trump as the final strain to have the lead come up to

your tenace.

When dummy comes down with a club fewer than expected, you can

count only 11 fast tricks. The 12th could come from either a 3-3

minor break or a winning green spades. First, which suit do you go after?

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On the last club East let go of

the lead with the spade queen.

Declarer discarded the jack of

spades and raked in four diamond

tricks to make the slam.

CINEMA PHILADELPHIA	TEL: 634144	CINEMA PLAZA	TEL: 699238	CINEMA CONCORD	TEL: 677420	AMMOUN THEATRE	TEL: 618274 - 618275	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Sandra Bullock & Bill Pullman in *While You Were Sleeping</*							

Iraq assails U.S position, demands end to sanctions

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — Iraq's foreign minister has blasted the United States for supporting U.N. sanctions against his country and accused a handful of nations of seeking to monopolise power in the United Nations.

The Security Council imposed sanctions, including a ban on oil sales, on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Council members, led by the United States, say Iraq has not met conditions for a lifting of sanctions, which include the full disclosure of Baghdad's programme of weapons of mass destruction.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf, in a speech Thursday to the General Assembly, reiterated Iraq's view that it has complied with all conditions for a lifting of sanctions.

"Despite all the propaganda, Iraq does not have any proscribed weapons, equipment, machines or material," Mr. Sahaf said.

He rejected the "hegemony of one or certain parties over the international community," and said, "we see that American statesmen are unfortunately ignorant of the facts of the region."

Iraq's disclosures have been piecemeal, and extracted only after the protracted effort of U.N. weapons monitors since Gulf war. In July, Iraq admitted for the first time having germ weapons stockpiles, including anthrax and botulism culture. The information came after U.N. inspectors found 35,000 litres of biological agents.

In August, Iraq disclosed an ambitious biological weapons programme. It admitted having 199 missiles and bombs tipped with germ warfare agents and a crash programme to make a nuclear weapon.

"Concealing such information has been the consistent policy of the Iraqi government from 1991 until today," U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright responded later.

"Not a single member of the Security Council agrees with the assertion... that Iraq has fulfilled its obligations."

"Iraq is seeking to turn its disregard for Security Council resolutions into a bilateral issue between Iraq and the United States," she said.

Mr. Sahaf, in apparent criticism of the West, said there had been "ill-intentioned exaggerations" about the danger of Iraq's weapons programme and stressed that they were now defunct.

Ms. Albright rebuked him during the right of reply session at the end of the day, saying that sanctions against Iraq are the wishes of all members of the Security Council, and that Iraq cannot be trusted.

"This is not the United States position; this is the United Nations' position," she said.

"Iraq's continued refusal to return stolen Kuwaiti property, to account for missing Kuwaitis, to end its support for terrorism, and to cease the repression of its citizens, shows its contempt for the United Nations, its lack of peaceful intentions, and the impossibility of the Security Council being able to trust Iraqi promises," Ms. Albright said.

The U.S. delegation did not attend Mr. Sahaf's speech, nor did three-fourths of the assembly, but it turned up later for rebuttal. Observers said the Iraqi delegation, which then returned with its own stinging response, left fuming.

"All the facts affirm the need to call upon the United States and no one else to prove its peaceful intentions and credibility, to desist from acts of provocation, aggression,



Mohammad Al Sahaf

to the U.N. Security Council, along with an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report. They are due to be presented to the council on Wednesday and discussed on Friday, diplomats said.

Western diplomats say the UNSCOM report by its chairman, Rolf Ekeus, will likely be negative, notably because of recent revelations that Iraq had hid a biological weapons programme.

There is no chance that sanctions against Iraq will be lifted in the near future, they said.

Mr. Sahaf did not mention a proposal made in April — U.N. Security Council Resolution 986 — allowing Iraq to export limited quantities of oil under U.N. control in exchange for food.

Iraq so far rejected the measure, saying it infringes on national sovereignty. Mr. Sahaf did not mention the food-for-oil proposal in his speech, but rejected it in interviews.

Iraq on Thursday denied a report that its officials had pleaded for partial oil sales.

The Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) reported on Monday that some Iraqi officials had pleaded for accepting the measure because they did not expect U.N. sanctions to be lifted before the U.S. presidential election in November 1996.

"The conclusions published in this (weekly) are false because they are founded on wrong information," the Information Ministry said in a statement.

"These reports are inspired by parties that don't want to stick to their commitment to apply paragraph 22 of (U.N.) Resolution 687," it said.

Under Resolution 687, the oil embargo can be lifted when U.N. experts certify that Iraq has dismantled its programmes for weapons of mass destruction.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Multiple murderer may be deported to France

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Multiple murderer Charles Sobhraj, wanted for a string of crime across Asia, may be deported to France after the cases against him are disposed of, the Press Trust of India said Friday. The news agency, quoting unidentified Home Ministry sources, said the 51-year-old Sobhraj, a French national, would be deported as he did not have either a valid passport or a visa. Sobhraj has been convicted on only one of the eight cases registered against him. The other seven pending cases are bailable, the sources said, including a daring jailbreak from New Delhi's high-security Tihar penitentiary for which Sobhraj has been held in solitary confinement for nine years. Sobhraj's lawyer, Debasish Mazumdar, however, declined to comment on the report. A spokesman for the French embassy here said the embassy "had not, at this stage, been informed by the Indian authorities."

French test site gets clean bill of health

BRUSSELS (AFP) — European Union (EU) experts on radiation hazard have given France's nuclear test sites in the South Pacific a qualified clear bill of health but did not reach all the sites, according to a preliminary report obtained by AFP. The three scientists charged with evaluating the measures France has taken to protect the population of Polynesia, where the test sites are located, said they were "satisfied on the whole." France has detonated two nuclear test devices within the last month. Two of the French test sites, however, at Fangataufa and Faa, were closed to the scientists, who said they could therefore not collect samples in order to evaluate environmental impact. A final report will be submitted next week to the EU Council of Ministers.

Dirt from Egyptian oasis stronger than metal

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian airport officials barred a Japanese scientist from travelling with samples of dirt from a desert oasis which he said could be used to make car parts stronger than lead, the daily Al Akhbar said on Friday.

Officials discovered two jars containing eight kilograms of dirt in the bags of the unnamed man. The Japanese told them it came from Siwa Oasis, the furthest oasis in Egypt's western desert, 800 kilometres west of Cairo.

The man said he had performed preliminary tests on the grey dirt which revealed it could be used to make car gears and mechanical parts "stronger than lead." He was on his way to the company where he worked in Germany for more tests.

Officials forbade him from taking the samples after the airline company discovered traces of sulfur in them and deemed the jars "potentially dangerous." The Japanese left on his flight, promising to return to Siwa to conduct further experiments, Al Akhbar said.

Aideed pardons foreign fishermen

MOGADISHU (AP) — Eleven Pakistanis and a Palestinian sentenced to five years each for illegally fishing in Somali waters were pardoned Thursday by General Mohammad Farah Aideed, his radio station said.

The 12 were convicted earlier this week by a court established by Gen. Aideed after he had himself appointed president of Somalia by a group of supporters in July. He and his government have not been recognised by any other nation.

His south Mogadishu radio station said Gen. Aideed granted the pardons after the court received an appeal for clemency from the government in Islamabad. The prisoners were released Friday.

Israel to get new navy chief

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's general staff has appointed Alex Tai to take over as commander of the navy, replacing Admiral Ami Ayalon, who is retiring after 32 years of service, the armed forces announced Friday. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who also serves as defence minister, approved the appointment of Vice-Admiral Tal. He is to be promoted to admiral and take over in several months.

Rafsanjani: China nuclear deal still on

HANOI (Agencies) — Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said on Friday that a deal involving the sale of nuclear reactors from China to Iran was still being negotiated with Beijing.

Mr. Rafsanjani, speaking during a visit to the Vietnamese capital, said negotiations over the site, price and time schedule for the deal were still in progress.

United States officials said last week that Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen had given an assurance during a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher that the deal would not go forward.

However, Chinese officials later put a different interpretation on events saying China had "suspended" for the time being" its nuclear reactor sale to Iran.

"What the Chinese have said could not be construed as suspension of a deal," Mr. Rafsanjani said at a news conference.

"They (the Americans) are rushing to baseless conclusion, he added.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said on Wednesday: "We have re-

Egypt, Israel agree to probe PoW killings

CAIRO (AP) — Israel has agreed to investigate the reported killings of as many as 1,000 Egyptian prisoners of war (PoW) in the Arab-Israeli wars and put those found responsible on trial, a leading Arabic-language newspaper reported Thursday.

The agreement was reached between President Hosni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin during a meeting last week in Washington, where they attended the signing of the Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) accord, the London-based Al Hayat newspaper said.

A senior Egyptian Foreign Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Associated Press that the PoW issue was discussed at the meeting, but that Israel had not responded to an Egyptian request for an investigation.

Aliza Goren, a Rabin spokeswoman, said the Israeli prime minister had promised to look into the

issue, but added: "I don't know of any formal or informal investigation."

If true, the deal would constitute a significant concession by Israel, which has until now refused to investigate the killings in the 1956 and 1967 wars. In August, Israel's attorney general ruled that too much time had passed to prosecute the soldiers.

Egypt similarly has sought to cool the dispute, calling the Egyptian-Israeli war a thing of the past. But opposition groups have kept up the pressure on the government to take action.

Al Hayat, quoting unidentified Egyptian sources, said the two countries agreed that Israel would form a military committee that would investigate the killings and that those found responsible would be tried, probably in Israel.

At the same time, Egypt would file a suit in Israel, seeking compensation for their deaths, the newspaper said.



END OF A COUP: French veteran mercenary Bob Denard surrenders to French troops on Thursday outside an army base in the Comoros. The French special forces, which put down the coup Mr. Denard led in the Comoros, arrested him and flew him to France (see page 5) Photo below shows "Captain Efix," a member of the Denard-led mercenary force that staged the coup, being taken away after his surrender (AFP photo)



Junblatt ousts Gaith as leader of Lebanon Druze

BEIRUT (AP) — Army troops have been deployed in a mountain town in central Lebanon after a crisis in the minority Druze sect threatened to degenerate into street violence.

The split within Lebanon's 200,000-strong Druze community, whose sect is an offshoot of Islam, came after former warlord Walid Junblatt ousted spiritual leader Sheikh Ghais.

Sheikh Ghais, who enjoys the support of some Druze politicians, has refused to step down.

He has filled, but only in acting capacity, the position of "Sheikh Al Aqil," the sect's highest religious position, since the death in the mid-1980s of Mohammed Abu Shara.

Sheikh Ghais has since been running the sect's religious affairs and on occasions voiced political views.

Mr. Junblatt, also minister of the displaced, chaired a meeting Thursday of Druze

notables at Baalbin, a major town in the Druze-inhabited Shouf mountains, which declared as vacant the position of "Sheikh Al Aqil."

Shops in Baalbin were closed Thursday as residents heeded a call for a strike to protest a visit there by Sheikh Ghais.

"We will not bow except to God," declared the white-bearded Ghais defiantly at a school graduation ceremony held in the town.

"We shall remain," he declared as helmeted army soldiers deployed on the streets around the venue of the graduation ceremony to keep his supporters and critics apart.

The army command said it had no reports of violence.

The reason behind Sheikh Ghais' removal was not known, but Mr. Junblatt has apparently been miffed.

Sheikh Ghais has taken a political line different from his and attempted to encroach on his role as the main representative of Druze in-

terests in the government.

Prominent Druze who sided with the ousted Ghais include legislator Talal Arslan, leader of the Arslan branch of the Lebanese Druze, and Parliament Member Faisal Daoud, a notable from Druze-inhabited southern Lebanon.

The dispute within the Druze sect comes at a time when Lebanon's four million people were trying to heal the wounds of the 1975-90 civil war which claimed 150,000 lives.

It also follows the surfacing recently of differences between the Junblatt and Arslan clans which make up Lebanon's Druze sect.

While making up only five per cent of Lebanon's population and mostly live in remote mountain regions, the Druze carry a political weight that belies their numbers.

Mr. Junblatt's Progressive Socialist Party fielded one of the largest militia during the civil war.

Journalist gets bail

Nationalists hold key in new Ciller government

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller on Friday called a cabinet meeting of her new minority government, backed by nationalist powerbrokers reluctant to approve democratic reforms long sought by the West.

The government will be a government of accomplishment," Anatolian news agency quoted Ms. Ciller as saying after she gained presidential approval for her cabinet list on Thursday night.

Ms. Ciller is to rule in minority with the support of far-right Nationalist Action party (MHP) head Alparslan Turkes and left-leaning nationalist Bülent Ecevit.

She pledged to sort out a huge public workers' strike, bring a lucrative Caspian oil pipeline across Turkish soil and take Turkey into a planned trade pact with the European Union.

His Sept. 20 article, quoting "informed and official sources," said that after the detection to Jordan of two senior Iraqis on Aug. 8, "Iraqi parties were trying to recruit Jordanian journalists and to revive all pro-Iraqi regime forces in Jordan by offering gifts to create a trend that runs counter to the official position."

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her promise to ease Turkey's harsh restraints on freedom of expression, political analysts say.

The European Parliament wants Turkey to lift the anti-terror law's article 8, which outlaws "separatist propaganda," in exchange for it ratifying a customs union deal with the European Union.

Mr. Ecevit, the mentor of armed "Grey Wolf" militants active in the 1970s, is a hard-line against Kurdish separatists.

Mr. Ecevit, who as prime minister ordered the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, has spoken out against the trade pact.

"If Ciller's vision is really to get the customs union then she has chosen the strangest partners," Hurriyet newspaper columnist Sedat Ergin said.

In theory, the Strasbourg parliament will rule in December on the customs union and it should be come into being on Jan. 1 next year.

However, to ratify the agreement signed in March in Brussels, the EU is demanding conditions, including the release of separatist Kurdish leaders and the suppression of amendment of the anti-terrorist legislation, which may not be supportive if Ms. Ciller attempts to make good.

Column 8

Bardot writes to Mandela to save elephants

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Brigitte Bardot has written to South African President Nelson Mandela criticising the killing of elephants and rhinoceros in the Kruger National Park, a statement from her foundation said here Tuesday. The former French actress, who now dedicates herself to promoting animal welfare, spoke out against the hunting of the white rhinoceros and the killing of elephants in South Africa's biggest wildlife reserve. She wrote: "South Africa has been notable for its eagerness to relaunch the ivory market. You have succeeded in reopening hunting for the white rhinoceros, thus condemning the species... I will do my utmost to avoid the same thing happening to the elephants." Kruger National Park kills several hundred elephants each year to avoid overpopulation, which damages the environment in the park. The national parks' management launched an international appeal in September to pay for transferring excess elephants to other parks.

Tourists barred from Chinese monkey island

HONG KONG (AFP) — The spread of a strange lung disease has forced the authorities to close a monkey island in southern China's Hainan province to tourists, a report said. Ninety per cent of monkeys at the popular tourist attraction in Nanwan were found by scientists to be suffering from "pathological changes" in their lungs, the Hong Kong branch of China News Service said. The decision to close the site was to prevent the unspecified illness spreading to humans and other wildlife.

Charlie Chaplin's son plans cultural centre in Soweto

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Eugene Chaplin, the businessman son of film legend Charlie Chaplin, is planning to build a cultural centre in Soweto, South Africa's largest black majority town, the economic daily Business Day said. Eugene Chaplin's entertainment is planning to spend 1.6 billion rand (around \$450 million) on the centre which will include a cinema complex, multi-media hall, bookshop and cafe and restaurant. Planning work has already started on a 200 hectare (500 acre) site in the Eikenhof district of Soweto, an area known for its lack of infrastructure. Mr. Chaplin, 42, sketched out the